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LONDON QUARTERLY  
& HOLBORN REVIEW

*Edited by J. Alan Kay, M.A., Ph.D.*

OCTOBER 1961

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PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

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## THE WHOLE CHILD

by ALEX G. MEARNS, M.B.E., M.D., B.SC., D.P.H., F.R.S.E.  
*(Senior Lecturer in Social Medicine, University of Glasgow)*

This is the Convocation Lecture, 1961, of the National Children's Home. In this volume Dr Mearns rightly emphasizes that the many-sided needs of children cannot be treated in isolation, and that nothing less than the whole child must be kept in view. The wide sweep of information here given is matched by a warm humanity, and the cogency of Dr Mearns' thesis will commend it to laymen and specialist workers alike.

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## PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Bernard E. Jones

If we submit everything to reason, our religion will have no mysterious and supernatural element. If we offend the principles of reason, our religion will be absurd and ridiculous.—PASCAL, *Pensees*, 273.

WHEN LORD GIFFORD made his bequest establishing a lectureship for 'Promoting, Advancing, Teaching and Diffusing the Study of Natural Theology' he could have little known the changes those studies would pass through in the seventy years following his death. Yet the changing relationship between philosophy and theology can well be traced through the various Gifford Lectures that have been delivered since his death in 1887. 'In our large towns in these days', declared John Stirling, the first Gifford Lecturer in 1889, 'in our capitals, in our villages, we are confronted by a vast mass of unbelief' (*Philosophy and Theology*, p.15). The purpose of the lectureship was evangelism through reason, for Lord Gifford said in his deposition:

My desire and hope is that these lectureships and lectures may promote and advance among all classes of the community the true knowledge of Him Who is, and there is none and nothing beside Him, in whom we live and move and have our being, and in whom all things consist, and of man's real relation to Him Whom truly to know is life everlasting.

This was in the tradition of Aquinas's *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity*, Kant's *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason*, and Paley's *Evidences*. If only the argument could be put plainly enough, men were bound to believe. Edward Caird, the second Gifford Lecturer could, write in 1890 of the possibility of a Science of Religion, and still in 1920 Henry Jones could claim to have used scientific methods, and concludes that 'it is no small matter that the use of the methods of science, if strict and unsparing, can thus support a rational religious faith' (*A Faith that Enquires*, p.361).

This trend continued in the 1920s, and Eddington and Haldane appear in the list of Gifford evangelists. This was still the age of the metaphysician and the moralist, and W. R. Sorley, Bernard Bosanquet, and Samuel Alexander had made their varying contributions. A. E. Taylor and A. N. Whitehead were to follow.

In the meantime, Wittgenstein had been tramping across Europe with the manuscript of *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* in his kit-bag; G. E. Moore in England had been asking questions about the meaning of words, and A. J. Ayer was to ask more questions; Barth had been laying the foundations of his theology, which was to find expression in the Gifford Lectures of 1937-8, and in Vienna Freud had been following the trail of another early Gifford lecturer, William James, in bringing psychology's searchlight to bear on religious phenomena.

This beneficiary of Lord Gifford's will has known varying fortunes and been variously named since his death. The child began as *Natural Theology*, and then, as if disowned by her dogmatic elder sister, assumed the name *Philosophy*

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## PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

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of Religion, and latterly, as symbol of improved relationships, has become *Philosophical Theology*. This orphan of the storm has been at times rejected by philosophy, disowned by theology and impugned by psychology. But the child is willing; there may not be many vacancies for handmaids in the twentieth century, but she may yet prove a useful 'daily help'!

## I

The logical positivist takes up the position that only statements subject to verification are meaningful. Because religious, moral, and metaphysical statements are not subject to verification, they may express pious hopes or reflect emotional attitudes, but they cannot express truth. Linguistic analysis takes the process a little further and raises the question of the precise 'cash-value' of such religious and metaphysical statements. If A. J. Ayer's brief discussion of theism in *Language, Truth and Logic* is to be taken as final, then the philosopher of religion may as well shut up shop. A. J. Ayer and the logical positivists have not spoken the final word, but they have served the philosopher of religion by raising a number of relevant questions concerning the nature of religious truth. This new line of discussion has led to the production of a number of essays by philosophers and theologians, including Flew and Macintyre's *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, Basil Mitchell's *Faith and Logic*, G. F. Woods's *Theological Explanation*, and T. R. Miles's *Religion and the Scientific Outlook*, to mention but a few.<sup>1</sup>

A clear distinction has been drawn between scientific and religious statements. 'The world was created by God' is a religious statement. 'The world was created in 4004 B.C.' is a scientific statement (even though a false one), since it is subject to verification tests. 'Jesus is the Son of God' is a religious statement; 'Jesus was crucified' is a factual, historical, or objective statement. Similarly, when the scientist talks about the end of the world and the theologian speaks of the Parousia they are using different languages, or, as it has been expressed, different 'mythologies'. Canon Ian T. Ramsey discusses religious language in the essay that follows.

Even when the scientist and the theologian have settled their demarcation dispute, it is still not clear what precisely religious knowledge is. Is there a religious way of knowing? Can we reach through mysticism or any other kind of religious experience something we can call knowledge? This is the continuing discussion.<sup>2</sup>

Similar problems have arisen for the moral philosopher. If A. J. Ayer is right, then ethics is no more than a department of psychology and sociology. Christian ethics is still a possible line of approach, since it accepts certain values as 'given'. Non-theistic moral thinkers, however, must look for other values on which to base their system, and they must face the same criticisms of logical positivism. The possibility of a non-theistic morality has attracted considerable attention, and some people appear to think that if we can have morality without religion one of the main purposes of religion—namely, that it should be a prop to morality—is lost. Mr Frederic Greeves deals with this problem in a later article, and Dr William Strawson takes up the challenge of Humanism.

One thing seems clear from the current discussion: we cannot hope to prove or

disprove the existence of God by reason. Any hope, cherished by earlier apologists and possibly by Lord Gifford himself, of beginning with the premisses of the empirical world and arriving at God as conclusion, has been dissipated. The 'evidences' are not so evident as the apologists thought. The 'proofs' of the existence of God have never survived Kant's criticisms. We have been anxious to hold on to the traditional arguments as 'pointers', but, as Macintyre has remarked,<sup>3</sup> three fallacious arguments are no better than one. The so-called proofs may embody insights which have little to do with the validity of the arguments. Mr J. S. McQuade takes up this discussion later in the symposium.

Reason, then, is no longer regarded as a possible way to God. It may indeed lead a man part of the way, but experience is the keynote of modern thought. John Baillie wrote: 'We are rejecting logical argument of any kind as the first chapter of our theology or as representing the process by which God comes to be known. We are holding that our knowledge of God rests rather on the revelation of His personal presence as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.'<sup>4</sup> He rightly points out that those who framed proofs of God's existence did not come to God themselves through these proofs. More recently Macintyre has expressed the same truth.

We ought not to be surprised that to accept religious belief is a matter not of argument but of conversion. Conversion because *there is no logical transition which will take one from unbelief to belief*. . . . The man who has come to believe can only give us his reasons for his believing by relating a segment of his biography.<sup>5</sup>

This is not to say there is no place for the type of philosophical approach made by Tennant. We must go as far as we can with reason even if we know the final step is 'conversion'. A 'religion' based purely on reason in the logical sense would no longer be a religion, but an extension of science, yet we cannot accept unreasonable beliefs and retain our integrity.

The revolution in philosophical thought has taken away any hopes of a religion based on empirical premisses and logical deduction and has driven the religious philosopher to see that the essence of religion is encounter with God. This is the major theme of H. D. Lewis's recent work, *Our Experience of God*. As Pascal put it: 'It is the heart which experiences God, and not the reason. This then is faith: God felt by the heart, not by the reason.'<sup>6</sup>

## II

Another revolution was taking place in biblical studies. Lord Gifford's wish was that religion should be studied by the same rules as any other science. The earlier biblical critics declared that the Bible should be studied as any other manuscript. Just as the Gifford approach tended to lead to a natural religion, so the approach in biblical studies tended to lead towards a belief in general revelation. The Bible is the Word of God; Buddhism and Hinduism might provide other words of God.

As Karl Barth remarked in his opening Gifford Lecture, the conditions of Lord Gifford's will provided more difficulty for him than for any of his predecessors, for he was to lecture on Natural Theology 'without reference to or reliance upon any supposed special exceptional or so-called miraculous revelation'. This was a sheer impossibility for Barth, and, having warned the Senate

of his intentions, he proceeded to lecture on *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God according to the Teaching of the Reformation*. This, he declared, was the best way he could serve the interests of Natural Theology—by showing its antithesis. The revealed Word of God is Jesus Christ. The Bible is the record of this revelation, and Christian preaching is the proclamation of this revealed Word. Man cannot prepare himself to accept this Word by a study of philosophy. Reason is no ally, since reason, like all man's powers, is corrupt. If this is true then there can be no conversation between the philosopher and the theologian.

Brunner, another Gifford lecturer, finds more place for reason, but he is quick to emphasize that the Logos of Christian thought is not the Logos of Greek philosophy. Yet for Brunner God is the Creator, and the contact between God and sinful man is not completely lost. But, finally, 'Christian faith is faith in Christ, and Christ meets us and speaks to us in the Bible. Christian faith is Bible faith.'<sup>7</sup>

Even allowing that the Bible is in some sense the Word of God, it is written in ancient languages and against the background of other cultures, and therefore we must still use reason in its interpretation. Barth allows that we must use reason in this sense, yet once we begin to ask questions about the validity and historicity of Biblical statements we are confronted with a host of new problems. We find ourselves asking the same question posed by the linguistic analyst. What is the 'cash-value' of biblical statements? Can we say, for instance, that Genesis 1<sub>1</sub> is revealed truth, while Genesis 1<sub>6-8</sub> is a clever guess at what happened? Are we to say that Mark 15<sub>25</sub>, 'It was the third hour and they crucified Him', is an historical or factual statement, while Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15 on how the dead shall rise is inspired myth which requires interpretation?

Bultmann, yet another Gifford lecturer, has raised all these questions in their most acute form by his attempts to demythologize scripture. The further we go in demythologizing, so many think, the greater the danger that we shall find ourselves with a religious philosophy rather than a Word of God. This is the fear that prevents the extreme fundamentalist from yielding an inch. Where do we stop in undermining the authority of Scripture? Bultmann knows where he stops, but some of his followers go further. Dr John Mcquarrie, one of the contributors to this symposium, has addressed himself to this problem in his admirable book, *The Scope of Demythologizing*. 'The limit to demythologizing', he concludes, 'is nothing other than the recognition of the difference between a philosophy of human existence and a religion of divine grace.'<sup>8</sup> So long as we recognize that religion and philosophy are distinct entities, then the conversation between the philosopher and the theologian can continue, but if either denies the possibility of the other's making a contribution of any consequence, then the line of communication is dead.

Bultmann's line of thought brings us back to the authority of religious experience. For even if we say that Mark 15<sub>25</sub> is an historical or factual statement, it is only part of the Christian truth. For the Christian declares that when Jesus was crucified there was an Act of God. This is an existentialist judgement, or, to put it another way, it is the kind of knowledge known only to faith. This is what Tillich calls ontological reason as opposed to the technical reason of logic and science.

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## III

We are driven back to experience on the one hand by the challenge of logical positivism and on the other hand by the biblical theologians. Will experience provide a hiding-place from the winds of change and a covert from the twentieth-century tempest? We are assailed again—this time by the psychologist. William James, in what is perhaps the best-known series of Gifford Lectures, examined religious experience with the insight of psychology. This approach was taken up by Freud, who would have had little hesitation in likening the present emphasis on experience to the neurotic's escape from reality. If Freud is right, then religion is an illusion. In his sense of the term, this means wishful thinking. It may be that God does exist, but man believes not because it is reasonable to do so, but because he finds it psychologically satisfying. Man is anxious to be rational, and so he finds good reasons for his beliefs, but, unlike scientific facts, they cannot be substantiated by logic. Religion is the universal neurosis which saves a man the trouble of forming a personal one, and gives him an escape from the harsh realities of the purely material universe, in which there is in fact no consoling Father-figure.

A more recent challenge from the psychological field has been presented by William Sargant's *Battle for the Mind*. After reading this fascinating study, we are left asking ourselves if we can ever be sure that our beliefs are anything more than the result of milder or more severe forms of brain-washing. If in the end man accepts the salvation offered by religion because he is at the end of his tether, when any solution is better than none, may it not be that even those who have not had to struggle through an emotional crisis have yet accepted their faith as a comforting way out of minor difficulties? We have to admit that blatantly emotional evangelism may be the psychological equivalent of brain-washing, and the doubt enters our mind that all our so-called reasoning and so-called experience may be no more than the rationalization of compulsive beliefs. The evidence of hypnotic suggestion reinforces this doubt. This interpretation could also apply to our scientific beliefs and, if taken to its extreme, might break our faith in any kind of reasoning process, leading to out-and-out scepticism or to an entirely subjective existentialism.

Reason, however, is by no means routed from the field, for it is through reason itself that we think it possible that our beliefs may be rationalizations. Reason is adept at self-criticism and knows its own limitations. The short-sighted person, who knows his disability, looks twice or more, but finally he must act on the basis of the information his limited sight gives him. The normal person distinguishes between waking experience and the substance of dreams. The cured mental patient can distinguish between present reality and the illusions to which he was subject. Even though the illusion seemed real at the time, he sees his present experience as reasonable as far as he himself is concerned, and coherent in that it is now confirmed by other people. Whatever truth there is in Sargant's suggestion and Freud's explanation, reason remains our only hope. We can suffer from illusions—we can rationalize—we may be subject to brain-washing processes and propaganda of all kinds, but reason remains authoritative for us. Our hope lies in our persistent attempt to think clearly.

Whitehead saw reason as the safeguard of the objectivity of religion. 'It secures for it the general coherence denied to hysteria.'<sup>9</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

We are now in a position to sum up the present situation in the conversation between the philosopher and the theologian.

One possible view—that it is the task of natural theology to begin from the empirical world and build a religious metaphysic—has been disallowed alike by the philosopher and the biblical theologian. At any rate, the end-product of the exercise would not be a religion.

A second possible view, and popularly held in an earlier generation, is that theistic truths can be established by rational argument. These truths are then supplemented by the truths of revelation. The value of such arguments is explored more fully in a later article, but it seems that the most we can hope for from such apologetic is a demonstration that the theistic hypothesis is not unreasonable.

A third possibility is that the Christian philosopher begins from biblical foundations and empirical knowledge and builds up a metaphysic within the context of Christian thought. Leonard Hodgson attempted this in *Towards a Christian Philosophy*, and more recently Dom Iltyd Trethowan has written his *Essay in Christian Philosophy* in the context of Roman Catholic thought.

Yet a fourth possibility is that the philosopher is to be the critic of the theologian, raising the questions that the contemporary situation demands, and seeking to formulate the answers. H. J. Paton defines this function of philosophy in the opening sentence of his Gifford Lectures<sup>10</sup> as 'to think dispassionately about religion'. It may be true that in the end religion is existentialist commitment, but, as Paton remarks, the leap of faith—or the leap of doubt—should not be made in the dark. He concludes his lectures by reminding us of the task of philosophy as Plato described it in the words of Simmias in the *Phaedo*:

About such matters it is either impossible or supremely difficult to acquire clear knowledge in our present life. Yet it is cowardly not to test in every way what we are told about them, or to give up before we are worn out with studying them from every point of view.

It would be difficult to find a better expression of the task of the philosopher of religion in any generation. Now we see through a glass darkly, but it is our duty to see as clearly as we can.

<sup>1</sup> The whole series of the S.C.M. Library of Philosophy should be noted, including two books by contributors to the present symposium, *Religious Language*, by Ian T. Ramsey, and *The Scope of Demythologizing*, by John Macquarrie.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Cognitive Factor in Religious Experience*, by H. D. Lewis and C. H. Whiteley, in Aristotelian Society Supplementary Vol. XXIX, *Religious Assertions in the Light of Contemporary Philosophy*, by A. C. Ewing, in *Philosophy*, Vol. 32, and *The Philosophical Reliance of Religious Experience*, by F. C. Copleston, *Philosophy*, Vol. 31.

<sup>3</sup> *Difficulties in Christian Belief*, p.63.

<sup>4</sup> *Our Knowledge of God*, p.132.

<sup>5</sup> *Metaphysical Beliefs*, p.209 italics mine.

<sup>6</sup> *Pensees*, 278.

<sup>7</sup> *Our Faith*, p.17.

<sup>8</sup> P.244.

<sup>9</sup> *Religion in the Making*, p.53.

<sup>10</sup> *The Modern Predicament*.



## THE CHALLENGE OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

*I. T. Ramsey*

WHAT IS this challenge? It is perhaps best understood, as it is certainly best measured, if it is seen as arising not from a 'position', but rather from a temper and an attitude in philosophy which has prevailed for something like half a century. When G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, in reaction to the pretentious and somewhat pompous language of the Hegelians, used the slogans of 'clarification' and 'analysis', they started in England a search for a clear, significant, precise, unambiguous language which dominated philosophy during the first four decades of this century.

What we now call 'logical positivism' may be seen as the climax of this movement, as the climax of this endeavour to set out the conditions for a clear, unambiguous, straightforward language. On this view only two kinds of assertion were respectable and had 'meaning'.

(i) First, there were those assertions which could be verified, at least in principle, by sense-experience. The parenthetical qualification needed inserting because in a pre-rocket age there seemed to be no chance of verifying by sense-experience such respectable assertions as assertions about mountains on the other side of the moon. But besides common-sense assertions about the other side of the moon, there were scientific assertions about electrons or other fundamental particles. These could not be verified even in principle by sense-experience, but it was nevertheless true, and importantly true, that sense-experience was relevant to such assertions. So to give the broadest defining characteristic of this first group of respectable assertions, we say that they are assertions for which sense-experience is in some way or other relevant.

(ii) At the same time it was recognized that assertions in logic and pure mathematics did not fulfil either version of this first criterion, and yet they had a respectability and a meaning that not even the most iconoclastic verificationist could gainsay. The result was that they were given an independent justification. This was always in principle possible, because there was never any sort of conflict between these assertions in logic and pure mathematics and the criterion of meaning definitive of the first group of assertions. Assertions in logic and pure mathematics did not wish to assert anything which the verificationist principle prohibited. It was on this feature that logical positivists fixed when they declared that logic and mathematics in fact assert nothing. They are merely verbal. All assertions in logic and pure mathematics merely display in one way or another the starting-point from which they have originated; they merely explicate the axioms or conventions which have been agreed or posited at the start.

Thus it happened that in the middle to late 'thirties, all assertions other than those which conformed to the so-called 'Verification Principle', those that is,

which could be verified by sense-experience, or those which occurred in logic and pure mathematics, were considered to be meaningless, and styled as non-sense,<sup>1</sup> and this description could be given with or without perjorative overtones. Certainly, Wittgenstein was willing to distinguish between useful and useless nonsense, and it was in the first category that he would put the Verification principle itself. This mention of Wittgenstein reminds us that he was one of the first to deprecate any narrow, circumscribed view of significant, meaningful language, one of the first to refuse to be bound within the narrow confines of the Verification principle. Indeed, the transition in Wittgenstein between the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922)<sup>2</sup> and the *Philosophical Investigations* (1953)<sup>3</sup> is a hint of the broadening which came to Anglo-Saxon empiricism in the post-war years.

Attention turned from questions about 'verifiable meanings' to an interest in 'use'—a change of direction associated with the slogan:<sup>4</sup> 'Don't look for meanings; look for use.' The result was that greater and greater interest came to be taken in the contextual settings of words and sentences rather than in the pictures which words may or may not denote, and contextual setting was taken in the widest sense—to include not only verbal context, but (for example) sociological context. Thus there occurred an increasing recognition that the Verification principle was (at best) only the touchstone for one brand (albeit an important brand) of meaning. Hence, the second slogan,<sup>4</sup> which belongs to post-war empiricism, 'Every assertion has its own logic', reminding us that to know what an assertion means on some occasion we must set it in the context of the particular discourse, or logically connected talk, in which it occurs, and the possible varieties of such discourse are legion. In our own day the 'ordinary language' philosophers of Oxford are those who stress this logical variety and richness of ordinary language, and in doing this they will never, like the positivists of old, deny in principle significance to metaphysics and theology, though some may be less interested in these regions than in others, and we need not be surprised if there are still philosophers who believe that the assertions of metaphysics and theology are only to be given some kind of sociological or emotional justification, and who would rejoice in being atheists. But the temper of contemporary philosophy, and its attitude to metaphysics and theology in particular, has changed greatly over the past twenty-five years.

Does the philosophy of language, then, present less of a challenge than it did in the heyday of the Verification principle? It is true, as we have seen, that at one time there was no room left for meaningful assertions in religious language at all. No one wished to assimilate religious language to logic or pure mathematics when it was supposed that these gained their respectability by talking of nothing whatever. Still less could a religious person think that the assertions of religious language could be verified altogether by sense-experience, so that, for example, to say that a man was a Methodist or an Anglican would mean no more than that he was sometimes to be found displaying conformable behaviour in the local chapel or parish church respectively. Nowadays, however, religious language has gained a reprieve, an invitation, and an opportunity to state a case for itself, whereas in the mid-'thirties it was commonly supposed that there was no such case in principle possible. But we must not rashly conclude that nowadays the task of the philosophical theologian is particularly easy or straightforward,

for in a way the basic problem raised by the Verification principle still remains—namely, how is sense-experience relevant to religious assertions? Professor R. B. Braithwaite was quite right to see this as the definitive challenge of the empirical philosopher to the religious man, whatever we may think of Braithwaite's own answer to the question.<sup>5</sup> The problem which faces the philosophical theologian is indeed twofold. Sense-experience must somehow or other be relevant to religious language; yet the assertions of religious language can never be exhausted by any reference to what is seen, heard, touched, tasted, or smelt. How can religious language reconcile these two positions in what must seem to be a precarious, knife-edge balance? How can sense-experience be relevant for religious assertions, without those religious assertions being given a 'naturalistic' interpretation and so ceasing to be religious? How can religious assertions go beyond sense-experience (as they need to do to be religious) and still be intelligible? Here is the contemporary challenge of the philosophy of language.

It is obviously impossible, in an article, to answer this challenge in any detail, but perhaps the following outline of a possible answer may be helpful. Suppose we begin by asking what distinguishes the religious man from his irreligious counterpart? What distinguishes the believer from the unbeliever? Basically, as our recent comments have just hinted, the religious man claims that there are situations—here and now—not exhausted by the spatio-temporal objects they display. If he is wise, and especially if he has an ear to contemporary debate in philosophy, the religious man will not readily talk of 'another' world, for that is a very loaded and misleading way of putting his claim. Neither, contrariwise, will he ignore what is seen, the 'data' of sense-experience. What the religious man claims is one situation which is *both* what is seen *and* more than what is seen. Can we find any paradigm, any parallel by which to approach and to commend this kind of situation which seems basic to the religious man? Here is our first move as we face the challenge of contemporary philosophy.

To answer that question, I suggest that we consider self-awareness. First let us notice that in talking of ourselves there is a necessary reference to verifiable criteria, and that this reference is capable in principle of increasing complexity and indefinite extension. To what the ordinary man would say about himself, the physiologist, the psychiatrist, the economist, the sociologist—to mention no others—will add even more. Yet if 'I' is to be wholly netted in such discourse, if such talk about myself is completely exhaustive, what has become of my subjectivity? What has become of the subject-object relation which is a basic presupposition of all our talking and all our experience? It may seem that when I say, 'I solved the puzzle,' and when someone says of me, 'He solved the puzzle,' identical utterances are being made. If so, let us notice that the second assertion is restricted wholly to *objects*, even though it displays what is traditionally called a *subject-predicate* form. It is only the first assertion—'I solved the puzzle'—which expresses the fundamental subject-object relation, the relation between the observer and what he is aware of, between an agent and that about which the agent acts.

On the basis of reflections such as these, the next move now is to claim that any third-person assertion—indeed, any assertion besides a first person assertion—is not logically ultimate. 'He solved the puzzle' is logically incomplete—and completeness is only obtained when this utterance is fitted into a first-person

frame so that we have something like 'I said, "He solved the puzzle",' or, again, 'I am suggesting you consider: "He has solved the puzzle."' All third-person assertions—which are (let it be noticed) assertions in principle verifiable by sense-experience—need thus completing in a first-person assertion which is logically diverse. The suggestion is that first-person assertions, while framing assertions or phrases with verifiable criteria, always go beyond them. Here then, in first-person assertions, is something which can be a religious paradigm for us. We can indeed echo Wittgenstein and say that solipsism is the primitive metaphysics.<sup>6</sup> Here, in the awareness we have of ourselves, is something grounded in sense-experience and verifiable criteria, but it is something which is also fundamentally religious, because it goes beyond such observables, because it goes beyond what is seen.

If we now inquire how we become aware of ourselves in this distinctive fashion, if we ask for situations in which this distinctive self-awareness occurs, if we inquire what are the grounds for the basic first-person assertion 'I am I', the answer to all these questions is to point to a disclosure which occurs when we develop a never-ending series of descriptive criteria such as physiologists, psychiatrists, economists, sociologists, will supply, a disclosure which reveals in this what is genuinely transcendent about us. For a distinctively religious assertion, the further claim must now be made that alongside and interlocking with such an awareness of ourselves as transcendent, is an awareness of an objective transcendence as well. Subjectively we come alive, we become aware of ourselves when what is seen, etc., takes on depth, becomes itself the vehicle of an objective disclosure.<sup>7</sup>

Our general conclusion will be that religious language has to be so understood, religious language has to be so structured, as to be grounded in such a disclosure as this, which is both subjectively and objectively transcendent. So grounded, religious language may combine both mystery and intelligibility; it has its roots in both the spatio-temporally verifiable and the transcendent. Only with such a grounding will religious language be distinctively religious, and if religious language is not given a structure suited to this empirical basis in a disclosure, it will not only never be understood, but it will lead to all kinds of bogus puzzles and pointless controversies.

Much earlier, the reader might have asked: Why bother with the philosophy of language? Is it not just a passing fashion in philosophy from which we have nothing special to learn? Even if we had not suggested that much is to be gained from grounding religious language in what I have called a disclosure, there would have been convincing answers to give to these questions, and our recent reflections can only make these answers even more convincing. For at least three reasons, the religious man may be grateful for the concern with language displayed by contemporary empiricism.

For instance, none of us can suppose that religious language can be *logically* simple if it is to match up to its claims. At this point the empiricist may well find himself (if not for long) in the company of an altogether unexpected fellow-traveller, the Barthian; for empiricist and Barthian can agree that God is not just one object among others. But then the parting comes, for the empiricist will struggle to explicate, and from outside, the logic of the assertions he is making about God. The philosophical theologian, no less than the Christian apologist,

will grapple with the logical structure of assertions which make what is, by ordinary standards, an exceedingly strange claim. The preacher may admittedly avoid such logical tasks and problems, and no one would be so foolish as to suppose that the preacher's utterances cannot strike home to those unacquainted with the explicit logical structure of what is being preached. But those who are frontiersmen on the borders between theology and philosophy cannot in the same way excuse themselves from facing a task on whose solution the success of the preacher must, in part, ultimately depend. The apologist must certainly be grateful for any illumination he may be given of his admittedly odd language.

Secondly, none of us can doubt that problems are part of the occupational hazard of the thoughtful religious man. Nor is this surprising, if he is engaged in the kind of problematical talking which our reflections would suggest. But surprising or not, that it is in fact the case can be seen from any text-book on the history of the Church or its doctrine. May we not now expect insights into language to help us with the traditional problems of philosophical theology?

Thirdly, we have no need to develop the old chestnut of angels on the end of a pin, to recognize that some theological exposition seems, at least to the outsider, a tremendous exercise in word-spinning. Here is what has been called a 'religiously inspired distrust'<sup>8</sup> of theology. Any movement, then, which constantly turns back to the empirical anchorage in which religious assertions are to be grounded and by reference to which they are understood, will certainly find a layman's welcome.

For such reasons, then, and many others, a religious man will be grateful for any help that can be given him to elucidate his language, and he must surely be grateful for having been forced by the empiricists to sit up and take notice. But he can be grateful for more. For the contemporary interest in language has not only created a challenge, it has also supplied insights which may be of tremendous value to the philosophical theologian in elucidating religious claims, in grappling with theological problems, in assessing the reliability of theological arguments—if only he will have the courage to make use of these insights with which the empiricist can supply him. Let me mention only four.

1. Presented with problems, the contemporary empiricist would suggest that we look to see whether we may have confused grammatical and logical form. Presented with puzzles and difficulties in philosophical theology, let us ask ourselves whether we have made over-easy assimilations. For instance, if we are puzzled about omnipotence, let us ask ourselves whether we have too easily assimilated 'exceedingly powerful' and 'infinitely powerful'.<sup>9</sup> If we look in vain for 'holiness' as a special characteristic of (say) a Bible, let us ask ourselves if we may not be too easily assimilating 'Holy Bible' and 'leather Bible'. If we look in vain for visible criteria of consecration, especially if some suppose consecration to be subject to empirical tests, let us ask ourselves if we are not too easily confusing 'pure bread' and 'consecrated bread'. If we get into an Arian-like difficulty over Christology, let us ask ourselves whether we might not be too easily confusing 'God's Only Son' and 'Tom's only child'. If we are puzzled about such a phrase as 'necessary being', let us ask ourselves, have we wrongly supposed a logical (because a verbal) parallel with 'human being'. Do we wrongly assimilate 'eternally generated logos' to 'continually generated electricity'; or 'the Last Things' to 'the last train', or 'the Second Coming' to a



'Return Visit'? Let us not suppose that adjectives and nouns always describe things and their characteristics.

2. More positively, if we are presented with a theological word or phrase such as 'Perichoresis', 'Episcopacy', 'Regeneration', or 'Real Presence', contemporary philosophy would suggest that we do not rush in to give a 'definition' or some such precise account of the term, that we do not suppose there is something called the 'meaning' of the term to be described as a sort of picture. It would suggest that we rather create, call up, display, contexts—and the more varied the better—in which the word would be used, in this way trying to see more clearly what significance and what empirical grounding is to be given to the doctrine. John Wisdom has well expressed this need to be constantly concrete:<sup>10</sup>

I believe that if, faced with the extraordinary pronouncements of metaphysicians, we avoid asking them to define their terms, but instead press them to present us with instances of what they refer to contrasted with instances of what they do not refer to, then their pronouncements will no longer appear either as obvious falsehoods or mysterious truths or pretentious nonsense, but as often confusingly presented attempts to bring before our attention certain not fully recognized and yet familiar features of our world. . . . features which can seldom or never be safely or vividly brought to mind by the use of general terms.

When Wittgenstein said, 'We have the idea that the meaning of a word is an object', when he spoke of our craving for a definition and of our contempt for concrete cases, he was not saying that these habits of 'abstract' thought always and everywhere mislead us. But he was claiming that too often when what we need is to come down towards the concrete, we don't, and that this especially hinders our philosophy, our metaphysics. . . .

And this has application beyond the sphere of metaphysics. For if we now turn from the remote sphere of metaphysics and think of more normal enquiry directed upon the actual events in nature, in life, we shall find on occasion questions which cannot be answered, statements which cannot be tested, either by experiment and observation or by reasoning in general terms. And amongst them are some of those questions and statements which mean most to us, and most call for thought. When, for instance, Sartre says that love is a condition in which one person consumes another or, when someone says that devotion is an explosive mixture of hate and love, or that we are all much more haunted by the past than we recognize, and more bankrupt of the power to live or to love than we allow, then these words call less for experiment than for thought. But thought too will fail us here if we think that all thought which carries us to the truth must be thought on lines as definable or at least as conventional as the thought of an accountant who assesses a firm's financial position, and forget how much it may be a matter of giving our minds to incidents and incidents. . . .

3. Thirdly, if presented with a theological argument which seems so much like word spinning, let us try to see the model on which it is constructed, or the models by which this complex discourse might be illuminated. In all this (and it is not surprising from our general remarks earlier) we might find that personal models afford valuable illumination of such doctrines as Grace<sup>11</sup> and Atonement, Providence, Miracle, and Prayer. But we shall be wise not to suppose that the personal model will take us the whole way. God is not one of ourselves.

4. More generally, as we have already hinted, contemporary philosophers would now agree that language is, logically, immensely variegated. It is certainly not homogeneously descriptive. Professor R. B. Braithwaite would suggest that

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to get a logical line on religious language, we parallel it with the language of morals whose logic (likewise by reaction to positivist criticisms) has been seen to be not only descriptive, but also declarative—declarative, for instance, of a commitment to an agapeistic way of life. So far so good, but Braithwaite seems to give a quite inadequate account, if account at all, of the objective reference of religious assertions. This I have tried to preserve by suggesting that the language of religion is not only descriptive but evocative, evocative of a disclosure which is both subjectively and objectively transcendent.

It was David Hume<sup>12</sup> who said that Christians should be suspicious of those 'disguised enemies' and 'dangerous friends' who undertake to defend the Christian faith 'by the principles of human reason'. Certainly we all know how the logos philosophy led to heresy, and to Tertullian's antithesis between Athens and Jerusalem; we all know how the reasonable Christianity of the eighteenth century often became 'Christianity not mysterious',<sup>13</sup> and 'Christianity as Old as the Creation'; we all know how Hegel finished with an Absolute instead of God, with the Gospels as pictorial aids to Absolute Idealism. Here was philosophy as a dangerous friend indeed. But this was because philosophy tried to imprison the faith in a uniform logic, or in great systems, or forced a descriptive ontology on to Christian doctrine. Not so now. The primary interest of empiricism is (as we have seen) in language and in the empirical basis—in the widest sense—of that language. Philosophy will take the language of the Bible, of the Gospels, of doctrine, of liturgy, *as it stands* and try to elucidate its point and significance.

The challenge of the philosophy of language, then, is not something to make us despair; it is rather something which should fill us with courage and hope. Here is the possibility of a new reformation. To face the challenge of the philosophy of language is possibly to recapture a vitality for religious language; it is to bring a liveness to Christian doctrine. It is to learn a discipline and an approach which will keep theology from having that formality and detachment which will always clothe descriptive language (against which, incidentally existentialists, too, have been loud in criticism), and which has ever been recognized by religious men of all persuasions as the most insidious of all theological blunders.

<sup>1</sup> The position is best represented in A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*.

<sup>2</sup> With an introduction by Bertrand Russell.

<sup>3</sup> Translated, G. E. M. Anscombe. Wittgenstein died in 1951.

<sup>4</sup> I need hardly remind the reader that these slogans, like all slogans, make their point by overstating their case.

<sup>5</sup> *An empiricist's view of the nature of religious belief*, C.U.P. 1955. See a further comment on Braithwaite below.

<sup>6</sup> Cp. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, 5.62, 5.64, and 5.641.

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps this is nowhere better exemplified than in the story of David and Nathan (2 Sam. 12). David comes to himself precisely as and when Nathan uses the story of the little ewe lamb to disclose the objective moral challenge of God's presence.

<sup>8</sup> A phrase used by H. E. Root, *Prospect for Metaphysics* (ed. I. T. Ramsey), p.79, of natural theology in particular.

<sup>9</sup> In this connexion Principal Frederick Greeves, of Didsbury College, Bristol, has pointed out to me that Susannah Wesley in her 'Conference with her daughter' (MSS. in Headingley College, Leeds) displays an attractive empirical approach to the attributes of God, not least to their necessary qualification by the word 'infinite'.

<sup>10</sup> Proceedings Aristotelian Society. Supplementary Volume XXXV. 1961 *A Feature of Wittgenstein's Technique*, pp.13-14.

<sup>11</sup> This was, of course, the distinctive contribution of John Oman in *Grace and Personality*.

<sup>12</sup> *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Sec. X, Pt. II, p.100 (concluding sentence).

<sup>13</sup> As the titles respectively of the books by John Toland (1696) and Matthew Tindal (1730) indicate.

## EXISTENTIALISM AND THE CHRISTIAN VOCABULARY

John Macquarrie

SOMETIMES AMONG our small change we come across a Victorian penny which has been so thinned by long circulation that perhaps only the date of its minting, if even that, can be discerned. A comparable thinning process has gone on in some of the basic terms of the Christian vocabulary. Every preacher knows that words like 'sin', 'grace', 'faith' have for most people lost the force and freshness which presumably they once possessed. They have become shadowy words, and to many modern ears they have an archaic ring. Their meaning has been so worn down as to be understood in a superficial, harmless kind of way, if indeed it is understood at all.

What has happened to these words? Briefly, we may say that they have been made into technical theological terms, and that they now constitute a kind of esoteric vocabulary which is still in regular use only within the Christian community, and which even there is imperfectly understood. Beyond the Christian community, the words are scarcely used at all and are even less well understood. Let us consider for a moment the word 'sin'. This word is probably connected etymologically with 'sunder', so that originally it clearly conveyed the notion of 'separation'. This notion is, of course, still central to the theological understanding of the word, but it has been entirely lost in ordinary usage. The word is commonly understood in the weak sense of a 'misdemeanour', and there is a tendency nowadays to contrast 'sin' with 'crime'. 'Sin' is taken to be an offence against private morality, while 'crime' violates the law of the land and is punishable by the State. This distinction may even be taken to imply that 'sin' is a less serious matter than 'crime'!

Is it, then, possible to find new words that can take the place of the old, worn-out terms, and that will convey their meanings more adequately? It may be doubted whether it is either possible or desirable to replace the basic Christian vocabulary. If Christianity has something distinctive to say, it is only reasonable to suppose that Christian theologians and preachers will require some indispensable minimum of distinctive words in order to say it. We cannot do without these words or find adequate substitutes for them, but it is clear that they stand in need of some kind of illumination that will help to restore to them a measure of their original depth and power.

It is true that in a few isolated cases some more or less adequate replacement may be available. For instance, in *The New English Bible*, the traditional word 'redemption' has mostly given way to 'liberation' or 'release'. Professor C. H. Dodd has explained<sup>1</sup> the policy of the translators in regard to this word 'redemption'. He tells us that it does not have the 'realistic reference to common experience' which characterized its Greek equivalent, used of the manumission of a

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slave, and so it has become for most people a somewhat insipid word. We are, however, in our time familiar with the 'liberation' of subject peoples, and this word 'liberation' restores something of the power that has been lost by the traditional term.

But even modern translations of the New Testament do not try to dispense with such basic words as 'sin', 'faith', 'grace' and the like. We have suggested that these words are indispensable, if the distinctive Christian message is to be expressed. Yet how are we to rescue these words from lapsing into a semantic poverty in which the greater part of their original and essential meaning has been eroded away? Or how are we to keep them from becoming the terms of an esoteric discourse, encapsulated within the Christian community and unintelligible outside of it? It would seem that all we can do is to look for some area of discourse in the secular world which will have sufficient affinity with what Christian theologians are talking about to permit of its terms being used in order to illuminate and restore fresh life to the traditional Christian vocabulary.

Some theologians believe that the philosophy of existentialism is the area of secular discourse which can best serve the purpose which we have in mind. 'Theology', writes Paul Tillich, 'has received tremendous gifts from existentialism, gifts not dreamed of fifty years ago or even thirty years ago.'<sup>2</sup> The gifts of the existentialists—though, of course, they were not consciously intended to be gifts to the theologian—are primarily gifts of language. Here we find ways of speaking about man's existence in the world which light up the traditional Christian vocabulary, giving to it a renewed power and relevance.

Existentialism can perform this function because of certain basic affinities between its understanding of man and the understanding of man which we find in the Bible. The existentialists, including the most secularly-minded among them, have rediscovered truths about man which are taught plainly enough in the Bible, but which, during the past four centuries, have been allowed to slip out of sight in the West, even in the Church. Existentialism may be regarded as a reaction against that optimistic post-Renaissance view of man which has dominated the West for a long time and has glorified the ideas of human progress, human perfectibility, and human self-sufficiency. The existentialists, on the contrary, stress the *finitude* of man, as thrown into a world in which he has to be; the *uncertainty* of human life, which is all the time haunted by death as the termination of man's being in the world (an echo of the parable of the rich fool); the fundamental *anxiety* which is attendant upon such an existence, in which, however slender our resources and however uncertain our future, we are nevertheless each one *responsible* for the existence that is ours. Ruthlessly, too, do the existentialists expose the varied devices by which we seek to cover up the less palatable and the more exacting aspects of our existence. Heidegger speaks of a 'tranquillizing' whereby we lull ourselves into a false sense of security and into the belief that everything is in the best of order. In a time when the use of 'tranquillizers' is widespread, this term used by Heidegger is readily intelligible, but it is simply the modern counterpart of what St Paul calls the 'boasting' of Jews or Greeks who thought that they discovered a security for their lives on the basis of a human righteousness or a human wisdom.

Theologians such as Tillich and Bultmann take this existentialist analysis of the human situation as their point of departure for their exposition of the

Christian message as a message for our time. Tillich's method of correlation<sup>3</sup> begins from the existential questions that arise from man's situation in the world, and looks for the answers in the Christian revelation. It is obvious, however, that such an orientation of the questions will determine the kind of answers that will be obtained, and will also determine the kind of language in which the inquiry is to be conducted. Bultmann's method of exegesis<sup>4</sup> proceeds on the assumption that 'the right question to frame with regard to the Bible is the question of human existence'. This approach, like Tillich's, has its consequences for the kind of answers that will be obtained, and implies the need for an appropriate terminology in which human existence can be described—the kind of terminology which the existentialist philosophers profess to offer us.

Let us now go back to the word 'sin'. Does existentialism in any way illumine or refurbish this much faded term? We find Heidegger speaking of 'alienation'. This alienation arises as an aspect of man's 'falling'; in his concern with and absorption in the world of things, man falls away from his genuine personal being. He becomes alienated or estranged from his true self. This conception recaptures the essential meaning which once belonged to the word 'sin' but which that word has now lost for most people—the meaning of 'separation'. 'Alienation' is not a word that can simply be substituted for 'sin', for 'alienation' here means 'separation from one's true self', while 'sin' means 'separation from God'. But 'alienation' is undoubtedly a word that can be used to restore meaning to the traditional term 'sin', and to reintroduce that word into current discussions of man. Moreover, the two kinds of separation are obviously connected very closely with each other. In Heidegger's teaching, alienation from one's own being implies estrangement from Being as such, while in the New Testament, the prodigal son had to 'come to himself' before he returned to the father.

Closely connected with 'sin' in traditional Christian theology is the idea of the 'world'. The world is understood as standing over against God. It is even in rebellion against God. It is the *locus* of sin, and the sinner is one who owes his allegiance to the world to which, so to speak, he has defected from God. In the New Testament, we even hear that the world is in subjection to demonic powers which are hostile to God. All this is perplexing to people who normally use the word 'world' for the physical universe, and who, if they are Christians, believe, moreover, that the world is the creation of God and belongs to Him. We cannot, however, read very far in the Pauline and Johannine literature without understanding that the writers were using the word 'world' in a sense very different from that to which we are accustomed. Usually, the 'world' stands not for the physical universe, but for a social or existential phenomenon—the collective body of mankind in its fallen sinful state, cut off from God, perverting and bringing under its domination every individual existence born into the world. Light is again thrown on this idea by the existentialists. Heidegger talks of the 'they'—the depersonalized and dehumanized collective body that dictates the standards of the lowest common denominator to every individual existence. Jaspers talks likewise of the 'mass' which levels everything down to a degraded mediocrity. Everyone is sucked into this whirlpool (call it 'original sin' if you wish) and only in and against and out of this milieu can any individual rise to his true stature of being.

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How then does anyone rise above the level of a fallen race? The New Testament speaks here of 'faith'—again a Christian key-word that has fared badly and been voided of its genuine sense. Most people nowadays understand 'faith' as 'belief', and more often than not they think of this belief as one to be accepted on authority because there are no good reasons that can be given for assenting to it. If 'faith' meant no more than this, then it would scarcely have sustained St Paul as it did. When we turn to the existentialists, we find that Heidegger speaks of 'resoluteness' as the way which leads back from alienation to genuine selfhood. The resolve to accept one's finitude, to scatter tranquillizing concealments and false securities, to live in the steady anticipation of death itself—this unifies the self and brings wholeness. If the emphasis here seems to be Pelagian, it nevertheless throws light on a frequently forgotten or neglected element of faith, the element of commitment to a way of life, which is more fundamental than intellectual acceptance of a belief. It will not surprise us therefore that an existentialist theologian like Bultmann lays stress on faith as an act of decision. He allows, of course, that other elements are present in faith besides. Once again, we cannot simply substitute some other word, such as 'resoluteness', 'commitment', 'decision', for the distinctive Christian word, but all of these words illuminate an important part of the meaning of 'faith', and a part which nowadays has fallen into oblivion in the common usage of the word.

We mentioned an apparently Pelagian emphasis, and perhaps someone will want to ask here whether existentialism is not a purely humanist interpretation of existence, so that it would have nothing to say about such an important aspect of Christian experience as is designated by the word 'grace'. It would indeed be unfortunate if this were the case, for perhaps no term in the Christian vocabulary stands more in need of illumination than 'grace', which is often enough a thoroughly confused idea with remnants of myth and magic still stubbornly clinging to it. Yet it is a mistake to think that existentialist philosophers are all humanists, in the sense that they make man the measure of all things and recognize nothing higher than human existence. This common mistake may be due to the fame of Sartre, whose existentialism is certainly atheistic. Yet even to Sartre the Christian owes a debt, for his honest analysis of human existence without God makes clearer than one can find anywhere else the difference between atheism and a religious attitude to life; without concealment, he mercifully shows us that in the absence of grace human existence is absurd and futile. Optimistic humanists ought to read him, to have some of their tranquillizing illusions shattered. But with the great German existentialists, the case is different. Heidegger speaks of a thinking which is submissive to Being. In a most striking utterance, he tells us: 'Man is not the lord of what is. Man is the shepherd of Being.'<sup>5</sup> The 'shepherd of Being' is the one to whom Being has entrusted itself and made itself open, and the phrase is reminiscent of St Paul's words, 'stewards of the mysteries of God'. Jaspers likewise talks of the 'limit-situations' in which man comes to the end of his resources and makes shipwreck, to meet there transcendence. In both cases the idea is that of a Being beyond man and not at his disposal which *gives* itself to him. Bultmann can speak of grace as an act—the act in which God gives Himself in Christ, and encounters man in his need. Grace is the drawing near of divine Being.

Running through the New Testament is the constantly recurring theme

that there are two ways open to man. The theme is variously expressed. St Paul can contrast living 'according to the spirit' with living 'according to the flesh'. There are the Johannine antitheses between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, life and death. In the existentialist philosophies, these opposed possibilities are expressed in the idea that human existence can be either 'authentic' or 'inauthentic'. In an authentic existence, man becomes whole, he attains the stature of genuine personal selfhood, he is the 'shepherd of Being', the faithful guardian of the mystery of existence that has been committed to him. In an inauthentic existence, he falls apart, so to speak, he misses himself, he scatters and loses the being that is his. Surely this is nothing but a new way of expressing the choice which confronts man in the pages of the New Testament. When the New Testament is interpreted in the light of this fundamental choice that confronts every human existence, its relevance to our time can hardly fail to break through. It becomes indeed a *kerygma*, a decisive word of God addressed to man, and can no longer be mistaken—as so many mistake it—for a puzzling mixture of ancient history, myth and moral insights. Even David Cairns, who is not exactly an admirer of existentialist theologies, acknowledges that Bultmann's use in preaching of the distinction between authentic and inauthentic existence 'has in a remarkable manner made intelligible and concrete for our day an important part of the gospel'.<sup>6</sup> And this is surely a claim which can be made for the whole range of existentialist ideas, as employed by such theologians as Bultmann and Tillich.

It is not, however, our wish to end either by making any extravagant claims for existentialism or by rebutting any of the criticisms that are made of this approach. The Christian vocabulary stands in continual need of being re-interpreted if it is to remain meaningful. At any particular time, there may be several ways of doing this. In the passage quoted above in which Tillich speaks of the 'tremendous gifts' of existentialism to theology, he mentions the similar gifts of depth psychology. There is no one final interpretation of Christian truth than can monopolize the field, and indeed excessive concentration on a single approach may lead to distortion. All that we can ask of such approaches is that for their day and generation they should express Christian teaching in a way which is loyal to the essentials of the New Testament, which makes sense, and which is contemporary. Judged by these criteria, the existentialist approach stands up very well. An increasing number of people, both in this country and overseas, are finding in it in the mid-twentieth century a way of making the Christian message relevant both to themselves and to those to whom they may have to communicate it.

<sup>1</sup> 'Some Problems of New Testament Translation' in *The Expository Times*, LXXII.270-1.

<sup>2</sup> *Theology of Culture*, p.126.

<sup>3</sup> *Systematic Theology*, I.67-73.

<sup>4</sup> *Kerygma and Myth*, pp.191-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Brief über den Humanismus*, p.29.

<sup>6</sup> *A Gospel without Myth?*, p.179.

## PLATO FAREWELL

### Some Reflections on the Traditional Arguments for the Existence of God

J. S. McQuade

THE INFLUENCE exercised for so long by Plato in philosophy and theology appears to have come to an end. At one time it could be said that the history of Western philosophy was a commentary on the *Republic*, but—in British philosophical departments at any rate—this is true no longer. His closely reasoned dialogues are no longer studied for their truth value, but only for historical interest and as exercises in logical analysis. Not only is the sage dead, but his corpse is used for dissecting practice! In theology too there has been an increasing tendency to charge Plato with the perversion of a number of Christian doctrines. I am setting out, not to rescue his reputation, but to add a further complaint to his score and claim that he has also perverted Christian apologetic.

This is not obvious, for although Christian apologetic derived one or two of its arguments in their general form from the Greek philosophers, they were developed in an independent way, and certainly in modern times there has been no marked resemblance between the Christian 'proofs' and their platonic ancestors. One fatal resemblance persists, however, often unnoticed: the resemblance in logical form. Plato was greatly enamoured of geometrical proof, where one proposition was necessarily entailed by another so that if we insist on asserting proposition A we must, in order to be consistent, also assent to proposition B. It is on this method that the Platonic dialogues are based. Socrates endeavours to persuade his opponent to agree to some proposition, and then shows him that the desired conclusion necessarily follows from it. It was on this deductive geometrical model that the Christian 'proofs' for the existence of God were developed. Some proposition was taken, for instance, that every event has a cause, and then it was sought to show that the proposition 'God exists' must necessarily follow from this. Anselm in the eleventh century, Aquinas in the thirteenth and Paley in the eighteenth all followed this model.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with the logic of entailment, provided that it can apply to a situation. It is in fact a very attractive form of proof, since it is so conclusive and final, completely stopping the mouth of the opponent. Its drawback is that it allows of no half-measures. Either an argument of this kind is valid or it is not. One flaw, one weak link, and the argument is worthless. The standard with which the traditional arguments must comply is therefore an exacting one, and they cannot be said to have satisfied it.

#### THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

This famous 'proof', devised by St Anselm of Canterbury, need not detain us long. It endeavours to show that the denial of the existence of God involves a logical contradiction. It may be stated as follows:



God is the absolutely perfect being, than whom no greater can exist.

The concept of God is the sum of all the good things that you could say about any being.

It is a good thing to say of a being that it exists.

Therefore if God were to lack existence, He would be short of one good thing. I could then conceive of a being greater than God of whom I can say all the good things that I say about Him, and one more—namely, that He exists. But we have already said that God is the being than whom no greater exists, so that to deny existence to God involves us in a contradiction.

This argument is the most overtly deductive of the traditional 'proofs', and it is noteworthy that it was regarded as the most impressive argument by Hegel, who was a fervent admirer of Plato. It is also a monument to the subtlety and ingenuity of St Anselm, but it is clearly invalid. It never convinced common-sense people, since they know perfectly well that they can have the idea of money existing in their pocket, they can be quite convinced that it is there, and yet, because of a mistake, an accident or a thief, the pocket could be empty.

Like the old calculation which proves that  $2 + 2 = 5$ , it is easier to be sure that there is a trick somewhere than to show precisely where the false move has taken place. It appears to be in the confusion between the concept or image of something existing and a bona fide belief that it really does exist.

Suppose that we could write on a piece of paper all the attributes ascribed to God including the statement, 'He exists'. If the list lacked this last statement, it is true that it would be insufficient as a description of a being greater than all others. To have a complete list it is necessary that we include this statement. This does not, however, compel us to believe that God really exists. If we define God as a being greater than all others we contradict ourselves if we hold up a list which is one good attribute short. But there is no contradiction if we hold up the complete list, including the statement, 'He exists', and cry out for all to hear: 'This is rubbish, there is no such being as God.'

Various attempts have been made to resurrect this argument, but they usually involve such radical changes that it is no longer recognizable, as when Descartes reformulated it as an argument based on the fact that religion is a universal phenomenon, found in even the most primitive races.

#### THE ARGUMENT FROM CAUSE AND EFFECT

This argument has been very popular and effective with quite simple and unsophisticated people. Daniel Defoe makes Robinson Crusoe employ it with Man Friday, and the fact that it convinces the savage does not seem at all incongruous. Put in logical form it states:

Every event has a cause.

Therefore the universe as a whole must have a cause.

That cause must be God.

Convincing as this argument has been, in the light of strict deductive logic it too is invalid. Two loopholes have been pointed out by Hume and Kant. First of all there is no logical reason why the series of causes should stop with God; God too ought to have a cause. This point has been appreciated by quite young children, who sometimes ask the embarrassing question, 'Who made God?' Plato and Aristotle endeavoured to meet this point in accordance with the well

known philosophical maxim: 'When in doubt draw a distinction.' They distinguished between two types of cause, material and personal causes. If a boulder rolls down a hill and narrowly misses your car, you investigate and seek the cause of the fall, but if you see a person heaving the boulder down the hill at you, you may investigate his motives, but you do not ultimately seek any explanation other than the nature and desires of the person who rolled the boulder. Thus since God is a person we need not look for any cause beyond the nature and desires of God.

This, however, takes the argument from cause and effect out of the realm of a simple deductive proof and raises very deep questions about the theory of knowledge which would baffle better-educated people than Man Friday. Moreover, there is an even more serious objection. Even if this argument is valid, it only proves the existence of a first cause. It does not prove that this first cause is God as we conceive Him. It is impossible to answer this objection without altering the logical form of the argument.

#### THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN

This is probably best known in the form given to it by Paley in his *Evidences for Christianity*, the analogy of the watch. If someone was walking in a desert place and found a watch, he would immediately conclude that some intelligent being, some person, had designed and constructed it. The universe might be compared to such a watch. It is an enormous system, the parts of which fit into one another to serve the purposes of the whole. Light reflects from the surfaces of things and co-operates with the wonderful mechanisms of the eye to produce sight, and instances of this sort could be multiplied in every department of life. The universe is a systematized whole which points to a designer.

Hume was very much impressed with this argument, and Kant declared that it was the strongest of the traditional proofs. Yet even here there are serious logical difficulties. To begin with, just as in the argument from cause and effect, we are at most justified in inferring a great designer; we cannot without further argument prove that the great designer has the properties we ascribe to God, such as personality and goodness. This may appear to be a small objection, but it is a particularly significant one. It indicates that there is something wrong with the logical form of these arguments.

A further objection is that design does not necessarily imply a designer. Some of the most impressive instances of system and pattern are in the animal world, where species are so well adapted to their environment. Hume gave a remarkable explanation of this fact which anticipated Darwin's doctrine of the survival of the fittest. The way in which animals are adapted to their environment, he said, proves nothing, since if they were not they would not have survived. The most serious objection of all, however, is that there is evidence not only of good design, but also of bad. There are terrible things in human nature, and even when we have explained these as being due to sin and free will, there remain the evils of nature 'red in tooth and claw'.

These two objections derived from evolution and from evil raise crucial questions in modern apologetic. I cannot discuss them in this paper, and only wish to remark that, while they are by no means conclusive, they are quite sufficient against this argument in a deductive form. A deductive proof must

have no weak links, no doubtful assertions, no unjustified gaps in it. It must show that the conclusion is necessarily entailed in the premisses; and these traditional arguments, together with the further moral argument which Kant devised to supply their deficiencies, have manifestly failed to do this.

The result of this methodological error in presenting belief in God has been a marked uncertainty in Christian apologetic. We have been like the aboriginal Irish, who found that their halberds were no match for the swords of the invading Celts and retreated to build forts in the inaccessible Arran Islands. As the weaknesses of the traditional proofs have become apparent, more and more dependence has been placed on experience as a support for our belief in God. It is personal and subjective and therefore unassailable. We have been very hesitant to press the reality of God upon the outsider as anything more than a possible or perhaps a good interpretation of reality of which they can become more sure by personal experience. We have been unable to present God to men in such a way as to say: 'This is the truth; obey it.'

Furthermore, these traditional arguments still appear to be the basis of our apologetic for the existence of God. Despite their defects it still appears to many that there is something in them. Sometimes it is said that, although each of the arguments is insufficient on its own, they have, like the legs of a chair, a cumulative effect. Each of the legs may be worm-eaten and weak, but collectively they are able to support one's weight if treated gently. This may be a satisfactory procedure in the furniture business, but it is an impossible attitude in logic. Three invalid arguments, or thirty-three, for that matter, can provide no logical support whatever. The valuable elements in this traditional apologetic cannot be salvaged by a patching which basically retains the old logical form. We must start again at the foundation and consider, not take for granted, what we mean by 'proof' and 'belief' and 'reason' in connexion with belief in God. Better logical forms lie ready to hand which can, I believe, better contain and direct the Christian evidence so as to give to our people the stability that comes from intellectual conviction. I also think that this recasting would give the contemporary agnostic a much thinner time than he is having at the moment.

The theory of knowledge is a very live issue in contemporary philosophy, and a good deal of progress has been made in it in recent years. But long before the present century it had become quite clear that the greatest part of our thinking is not conducted by deductive logic at all, but by logic of another pattern. We normally use a combination of three factors—hypothesis, deduction, and observation. We form a hypothesis, ask ourselves what we should expect to find if this were true, and then endeavour to verify or falsify these deduced consequences by observation of some kind. The process is applied somewhat differently by a scientist, a detective, a historian, and a housewife, but it is fundamentally the same in each case. One or two points in connexion with this hypothetico-deductive logic are worth noting.

To begin with, it is not so strict as deductive logic. In the latter an argument is either completely valid or completely invalid; one logical flaw is sufficient to invalidate an argument. In hypothetico-deductive logic this is not so. Provided that a hypothesis is reasonably successful and comprehensive in explaining and covering the facts, it is not completely invalidated by a few discrepancies, for



they do not show that the hypothesis must be scrapped. The matter may need further investigation and the hypothesis require only modification. Consequently, hypotheses are not simply divided into valid and invalid, black or white, so to speak, but are graded from the pure white of a virtual certainty through various intermediate greys to the black of a hypothesis whose consequences have been falsified in all departments.

The importance, in disproving any hypothesis, of having a more comprehensive and successful theory is also noteworthy. A hypothesis, even a deficient one, cannot be seriously challenged merely by pointing out that its success is not complete. The challenger should go further and show that the facts which the hypothesis covers can be explained equally well by another less objectionable theory. Agnosticism is not enough.

The application of these considerations to Christian apologetic is obvious. Our hypothesis is God, and what is more, God as He is revealed in the Bible. There can be no rigid distinction between natural and revealed theology, which is as harmful in apologetic as in theology. Propounding this hypothesis is not an unwarranted assumption, accepting the case that we are about to prove. It is true that we are convinced of the truth of Biblical revelation before we philosophize about life as a whole. We believe in Christ from looking at Christ. But we are not thereby prevented from giving this conviction a further test by treating it as a hypothesis to explain the more diverse facts of nature, history, and experience. As a matter of fact, the source of a hypothesis is of no consequence whatever. We may have no idea how or when we thought of it, or it can be suggested by an accident, or most frequently, as in this case, it can be derived from some part of the evidence. But it does not matter, since it is the success of a hypothesis that is questioned, not its origin.

From this hypothesis certain consequences could be expected to follow. From the fact that God is personal in the Bible, we should expect that personality would be the most important thing in the universe. From the righteousness of God—which is not in the Bible personal integrity so much as moral purpose which is active in righting wrongs, saving the oppressed, and working all things towards His goodwill for them—it should follow that there is a moral pattern in history. Some approach to man, such as the Incarnation, also follows from this Biblical picture, and also some means of redemption to meet human sin and degradation. The possible deductions are infinitely varied and cover all the telling points which were formerly made under the traditional arguments. They also include a great many more, such as the patterns of history and the facts of revelation, which did not feature in the old deductive proofs. These deductions need not be made *a priori* before any review of the evidence has taken place; they can be suggested by the evidence and seen later to follow from the hypothesis and so confirm it.

The third element, observation and verification, is still controversial in its application to theology, but the general tendency has moved away from the attitude which regarded theological statements as being incapable in principle of being verified and falsified. They are verified by their success in covering the data which they explain, progressively weakened by unexplained discrepancies, rendered ineffective by a critical number of such discrepancies, and completely falsified by a more successful alternative hypothesis.

In support of the hypothesis of the Biblical personal righteous God I would adduce evidence from the following fields.

1. *The Realm of Natural History.* Despite the supporters of the famous fifty million monkeys and their typewriters who are supposed by statistical probability to be capable of eventually producing a copy of *Hamlet*, the development of the various forms of life leading up to man is most simply and economically explained as being purposive.

2. *The Realm of Human Life.* The nature of human personality, with its aspirations, its dissatisfaction with material goods, and its search after ultimate truth, will not fit into materialistic, Marxist, or Freudian categories, and finds its most obvious explanation in the belief that we are the creation of a being who is personal.

3. *The Realm of History.* Our knowledge of history is like a large and incomplete map, and the task of standing back and making general statements about the nature of the whole terrain which it represents is a difficult business which tends to involve innumerable qualifications and exceptions. However, to put the matter as conservatively as possible, the thesis that there is a power which works for righteousness, or, in Biblical terms, that God judges history, is *prima facie* a much more obvious interpretation than Nietzsche's notion that the battle is always to the strong or the dialectical theories of the idealist Hegel or the materialist Marx.

4. *The Realm of Revelation.* Very difficult technical issues are involved in the three fields already mentioned, and the same is true of the Bible, of course.<sup>1</sup> The extent of the field is nevertheless smaller, and since the verification and falsification of theism is not here an incidental matter as it would be in biology or history, it is possible to view the matter as being contained here in a nutshell. One might think with justification that God had provided in the Bible a place where the whole matter could be decisively settled. It is here that the Christian finds his supreme proof of the reality of God. This is especially true of the Gospels. The incarnation is recorded in four related but distinct accounts. There is no shortage of evidence, and the Christian apologist challenges the unbeliever to provide an explanation for it which can compare with his contention that it is true. It is not simply a question of a few miracles and tricks to join on to the multitude of such stories that cannot easily be explained. What we must explain is a personality, so balanced so incisive in His statements, humble and yet royal, approachable and yet different, an extraordinary personality who claimed to belong to the category of the divine in a sense which we do not share, who claimed, indeed, to be the Son of God. The simplest way out, and one of the oldest, is to impugn the reliability of the Gospels. This is the expedient which Bertrand Russell surprisingly adopted in an Asian Club interview some time ago. He can hardly have done so on the basis of recent reading. The hundred years of intensive research, Christian and otherwise, that has been devoted to this question cannot be said to have proved that every single word recorded of Jesus is demonstrably authentic, but it does appear to have pretty well removed this first refuge of the opposition, and shown that if there is any such thing as historical evidence, there is quite enough of the character and teaching of Jesus portrayed in our Gospels to enable us to assess the genuineness or otherwise of His claims.

The various explanations culled from abnormal psychology perish on the transparent sanity of the Gospel story. The only theory that is even plausible is that Jesus was genuinely and sincerely mistaken on the basis of Old Testament prophecy. This is a logical possibility, but when it is balanced over against the amazing character and personality portrayed in these accounts, this possibility fades into an unlikelihood. If God wished to reveal His character, what more could He reveal than this.

5. *The Realm of Experience.* This heavily overworked servant of popular apologetic has been left to the last neither as the good wine nor as an unimportant postscript. It is insufficient in itself either for the purposes of apologetic, or even personal religion. But it has an important and even essential place in Christian belief. Nor need it be misty mysticism. Christian living and its consequences are described in some detail in the New Testament, and this is naturally something which admits of verification. A good deal of this corroboration is personal; by its very nature, it can only be used to confirm faith in ourselves not as apologetic material. Some of it, however, can be used by the apologist. The Christian character claims to be quite distinctive, and if Christian biography can show, as I think it can, that there is something unique in Christian *agape*, it is, perhaps unconsciously, conducting a valid apologetic.

All this has probably appeared more like a research programme than an argument, and that is exactly what it is. Like every good hypothesis, the theistic one is fruitful. It raises questions which stimulate inquiries in a great number of fields, not only in the realm of nature and human nature, but also in comparative religion and biblical criticism. It is not simply an open-and-shut case, but involves an ever-moving discussion. But we carry on this discussion with the balance of probability very much in our favour. This is especially the case when the evidence of all these fields is taken cumulatively and our thesis compared with such counter explanations as our opponents can give. When the matter is viewed in such a way that the key question is not some technical point like the status of biological categories, but the interpretation of the Gospels, the matter is even clearer; and when to these objective considerations there is added saving faith and the additional factors of experience which follow it, the mature Christian regards God as a fact rather than something about which there is some element of doubt. Nor does this involve any closing of the mind. As we have endeavoured to show, it is rather a stimulus. To feel that you have the key does not discourage you from wanting to open the door.

I feel, then, that our situation is a good deal stronger than even the most optimistic of us might have expected. A vast amount of biblical, historical, and scientific material has been accumulated. This material has not popularly been given its full force in popular apologetic because of our inattention to this matter of logical form. I doubt whether the Greek model was ever really a friend to us, and even if it was, the time is long overdue for us to bid it a final and decisive farewell and put the twentieth-century apologetic in the background of twentieth century theory of knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> These include not only critical and historical questions, but also questions in comparative religion, the vindication of one revelation as against others.

## THE CHALLENGE OF NON-THEISTIC ETHICS

Frederic Greeves

NEW QUESTIONS usually turn out to be old questions in revised form, but it is unwise to assume that this implies either that they have already been satisfactorily answered or that their modern shape has left their previous character unmodified. So it is with questions about the relation between ethics and theology, between morality and religion. Much that is being said and written today is an obvious echo of long-past debates, but on both sides viewpoints have changed.

There is much kinship between contemporary naturalistic ethics and the outlook of, for example, T. H. Huxley sixty years ago. Julian Huxley published in one volume his grandfather's Romanes Lecture (*Evolution and Ethics*, 1893) and his own Romanes Lecture (*Evolutionary Ethics*, 1943).<sup>1</sup> To these he added historical and critical notes which admirably illustrated the changes that fifty years had brought—changes due to scientific progress. Today, further modifications would need to be made; critics of evolutionary ethical theory will attack a missing target if they limit themselves to the premises and conclusions of nineteenth-century natural science. And yet Julian, no less than his grandfather, is confident that evolutionary ethics prove their superiority to the ethics of 'religious moralists' and to what he terms 'salvationist ethics'. Now, he claims, 'our ethical yardstick is itself dynamic, and must be used for making long-term social measurements as well as immediate individual ones'. 'There is indeed a widespread belief in the democracies that our ethics need reformulating. And today this can only be done in relation to general evolutionary standards' (pp.132ff.).

The standpoint of Christian ethics has also been modified. Paley's famous definition of virtue, 'the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting life', would no longer satisfy most thoughtful Christians. It leaves too many questions unanswered; it falsely simplifies the character of moral obligation; it makes future reward the sole motive in a way which offends the conscience, not least that of the Christian. Yet few theists and (probably) no Christians can be content to separate talk about morality from talk about God. Most Christians would hold that 'everlasting life' (including the possibility of 'everlasting happiness') is somehow related to virtue.

Within the limits of this essay it is possible to indicate only some of the many ways in which attempts to divorce morality from theological belief, to separate moral obligation and the discovery of moral duty from religious faith, offer a challenge to the believer. The word 'challenge' is significant. A challenge, even if made by an enemy, summons us to correct our own thinking as well as to criticize our opponent. It would be a serious mistake if Christians hesitated to

learn from those whose views they oppose. It would be equally disastrous were we to treat all exponents of non-theistic morality as though they were saying the same things.

#### SOME TYPES OF NON-THEISTIC ETHICS

1. For our present purpose, though (emphatically) not for other purposes, we may ignore *Marxist* and near-Marxist theories. When Lenin wrote: 'For us morality is wholly subordinated to the interests of the proletarian class-struggle', he gave to 'morality' a meaning which has nothing in common with its meaning in most usage. This he well knew: 'We deny all morality taken from . . . non-class conceptions.' To say this about Lenin is not to deny that there are lessons which the Christian moralist may learn from him and from Marx and Engels. It is not, however, from this source that the significant *challenge* of non-theistic ethics comes.

2. Neither need we now pause to consider the *emotive-theory* of ethics. In its original form this reduced all ethical statements to the expression of individual emotional reactions.<sup>2</sup> Like all ethical theory which has sought to establish *feeling* as the sole basis of morality, this theory has proved unworkable. In a brilliant chapter entitled 'The Linguistic Retreat from Emotivism', Brand Blanshard<sup>3</sup> has analysed and criticized the attempts of writers such as A. J. Ayer, J. O. Urmson, and S. Toulmin to modify this theory without entirely abandoning it. As Blanshard rightly says, 'their work is more than a retreat from emotivism. It is an able attempt, however abortive, to find a place for reason in ethics.' As such it is of value to the Christian, who must wrestle with the relation between reason and feeling in his ethics as in other aspects of his life. (It is of special importance to Methodists with their emphasis upon 'the warmed heart'.) The primary significance of this type of inquiry, however, is in reference to the validity of theological statements, with which is bound up the meaning of ethical statements; and that is another matter.

3. We come to the heart of the matter when we turn to attempts to found ethics upon *scientific fact*. Here we must distinguish, but not separate, those who look primarily to the natural sciences, especially to biology, from those whose interest is mainly in the personal or social sciences, notably psychology and sociology. It is, however, important to notice that this difference illustrates the sphere of study in which particular writers are engaged, rather than points to any theory that ethics is wholly dependent upon one individual science or one group of sciences.

The core of the argument is that the fact-finding activity of scientific inquiry provides the only reliable basis for the formation of ethical judgements. Julian Huxley, in the work already cited, cast his net widely over a large number of scientific disciplines. Freud has as large a place as Darwin in this task; the anthropologist stands alongside the geneticist. What once was attempted by the prophet and the priest is now to be effected by the scientist, although (as befits his role) he will form his judgements more slowly. It is not unfair to say that he is apt to state his conclusions with no less dogmatism and passion.

It is very important to distinguish this point of view from that of a writer such as Bertrand Russell. Russell, with sustained satire and even venom, seeks



to release morality from its bondage to theology, but he is equally anxious to separate ethics from science. He writes:

Ethics differs from science in the fact that its fundamental data are feelings and emotions, not percepts. This is to be understood strictly; that is to say, the data are the feelings and emotions themselves, not the fact that we have them. The fact that we have them is a scientific fact. . . . But an ethical judgement does not state a fact; it states, though often in a disguised form, some hope or fear, some desire or aversion, some love or hate. It should be enunciated in the optative or imperative mood, not in the indicative.<sup>4</sup>

We are not surprised to discover that Russell's description, in this volume, of what is 'good' reflects his own emotions, and that the 'good life' which he envisages is one in which those who share his temperament and interests would be happy.

With this way of thinking we must contrast that which sees the contribution made by science to ethics precisely in its fact-finding capability. This was well put in a popular book by C. H. Waddington:

The contribution which science has to make to ethics, quite apart from questioning its fundamental presuppositions, but merely by *revealing facts* which were previously unknown or commonly overlooked, is very much greater than is usually admitted. The adoption of methods of thought which are commonplaces in science would bring before the bar of ethical judgment whole groups of phenomena which do not appear there now.<sup>5</sup>

Waddington went on to emphasize a point which, as he noted, is often ignored or denied—namely, that the scientific *attitude* itself involves 'a certain ethical standard'. It was, he argued, a false faculty-psychology, which sharply separated 'feeling' from 'reason', which encouraged the belief that the scientist should be without ethical judgements, i.e. ethical 'feelings'. The scientist, says Waddington, is 'full of passion'. At this point Waddington comes near to, but does not quite reach, the identification of ethical judgement with feeling. For him it is 'scientific imagination and insight' which enables scientists to 'pass judgement on human behaviour; those things which are based on the scientific attitude, or encourage it, are good, those which stultify or deny it are to that extent bad.'

In that last quotation we have the heart of the matter. To some exponents of this belief religion is the arch-enemy of the scientific attitude and, therefore, of sound morality. Theological ethics are 'superstitious'; they are the ethics of *tabu*, of external sanctions. The charges are many. For not a few it is the doctrine of original sin which is the main offender, for this is taken to mean that the non-believer is incapable of any moral decision or virtuous action. The most vitriolic attack on this alleged doctrine is that of Kathleen Nott in *The Emperor's Clothes* (1953). Here lay theologians, especially T. H. Eliot, Basil Wiley, C. S. Lewis, and Dorothy Sayers, are pilloried and misunderstood. This work, however, is hardly characterized by a calmly passionate, scientific attitude. Bertrand Russell's attack on theological ethics is almost equally unrestrained.

Far more deserving of attention is the serious and cogently argued position of writers such as Huxley and Bronowski (whose outlook, though not that of a theist, often approaches that of a Spinoza-type pantheist). Special reference is

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also necessary to Erich Fromm, who repudiates the belief that interest in religion is a symptom of emotional conflicts whilst, at the same time, seeking to divorce ethics from religion.

Fromm provides a good example of the conviction that scientifically grounded ethics offer a deliverance from the harmful effects of ethics based upon religious belief. The title of one of his books, *Man for Himself*, aptly describes his position. He is, perhaps, the most persuasive exponent of this point of view. In a later book (*Psychoanalysis and Religion*), Fromm sought to show that he was not destroying anything that is of value in religion. 'God', he says, not without truth, 'has become an idol for many.' So religion must consist in ridding man of all idols, including 'God'. And this is most urgently necessary in relation to morals.

God, he argues, is not a symbol of power, but of *man's own powers*. Unhappily, man has projected 'the best he has' on to God, and has thus impoverished himself. And so man's own powers have become separated from him and he has become *alienated from himself*. Hence man feels like a sinner. He tries to win forgiveness by emphasizing his own unworthiness. But this guilty sense of worthlessness is the very attitude from which his sin stems. So he is in a dilemma. The more he praises God, the emptier he becomes. The emptier he becomes, the more sinful he feels. The more sinful he feels, the more he praises God—and the less is he able to regain himself. Only as man lives for himself, finding in himself the power he needs, can he discover what is right and do it.

It is to psychology that Fromm particularly looks, but his main thesis is shared by a growing number of able men and women whose moral concern cannot be doubted. 'Man for himself' is the theme of all that they say. But this is not a revival of Comte. There is no blind worship of man as he is, nor a facile optimism about what man may *easily* become. The reverence for Nature, the humility before the facts of existence, the clear realization that man must *strive* for the goal, which characterize the best expression of this 'faith', often provide a salutary warning to some types of religious piety. If quietism and antinomianism were essential features of religion, as many of these critics of theism imagine them to be, we should need to go far in agreeing with their warnings. Precisely because under the name 'religion' is included so much that is inimical to human well-being, and destructive of all sound ethical judgement and virtue, there *is* a challenge in non-theistic morality.

#### A THEISTIC ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE A NON-THEISTIC ETHIC

One way of replying to the type of ethics at which we have been looking is offered in an important recent book, although the author does not explicitly deal with matters we have been discussing. In, *The Theological Frontier of Ethics* (1961), W. G. MacLagan has offered a closely-argued case for the separation of morals from religion. He himself leans towards, and certainly provides room for, belief in God, although he insists that this God must be thought of as *supra-personal*, by which is meant not 'personal *plus*' but an indescribable transcending of personal and impersonal.

It is impossible to do justice here to this work. It is in the Kantian tradition,

although the author differs from Kant at many points. For MacLagan the *right* is more significant than the *good*. Morality is understood wholly in terms of *duty*. The consciousness of absolute moral demand is the essence of morality. We cannot stay to note the extreme and acknowledged difficulty in which this author finds himself as he seeks to allow for an objective 'order of values' without landing himself in a type of philosophy which he rejects, or in a position in which he may be said to have smuggled in belief in God (understood as the *sustainer* of absolute values) as a necessary part of the recognition of absolute moral demand.

The position which MacLagan finally reaches may be inadequately summarized by the following quotation.

I . . . heartily agree that . . . a man who sets himself to get on without religion may be like a man who persists in hopping on one leg along a road in which he might more comfortably and quickly proceed by walking on two. None the less a man who is under the honest impression that he has only the one leg not only must but can, however painfully and slowly, travel that way (p.185).

That is to say there is a value for morality in the right kind of religion, but this can never mean the essential and absolute dependence of morality upon religion. It would not be fair to equate this with Arnold's description of religion as 'morality touched with emotion', but it is not far from it.

There is much in MacLagan's book with which we may agree. He argues that morality, as distinct from mere conventional decency, is always 'religious', even though it is not dependent upon religion. His suggestion that part of the meaning of 'God' is the moral law and that the so-called 'order of values' is God is one which I should like to be able to pursue, perhaps reaching somewhat different conclusions from MacLagan's. But in the end religion remains an adjunct to morality; God remains the 'something extra' in the good life.

I believe that the truth will only be found when we turn our attention from the *right* to the *good*, when (to use more technical language) our ethics are teleological rather than deontological. The naïve notion of morality which looks for its whole material in a few or many 'commands' somehow 'given by God' inevitably lends itself to the ridicule bestowed upon it by writers such as some we have mentioned. But their confident belief that man can discover the good by studying nature, including human nature, is a half-truth only. It is a half truth, sorely needing to be learnt; Christians are all too prone to forget that what is *right* can never be discovered without careful inquiry into what *is* and into what is *possible*. In this way many sciences have indeed contributed to ethical progress and would do so more rapidly were men more attentive.

But the good is a goal which is not yet. Even if we think only of this earthly existence, that is true. Mere survival is not the goal, and 'happiness' is the most ambiguous of words. The challenge to the theist is to establish that the nature of the good life has been sufficiently revealed to us for us to be able to press towards it. This becomes more significantly so if we believe that the goal is not here but Beyond.

We must grant to our critics many things that they say. We must acknowledge that we inevitably raise the issue that different religions have different goals, and that we are faced by the fact that professing Christians have disagreed

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about nearly every matter of ethics. We must also freely confess that the goal is not given to us as a blue-print; it is, rather, pictured in a human life, fore-shadowed by particular events in human history. It is given to us as a direction-post rather than as list of rules or an architect's plan. It is, however, a goal of which the most clear feature concerns man's relationship to God. It is that fact which makes it unattractive to man-without-God.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: 'The knowledge of good and evil seems to be the aim of all ethical reflection. The first task of Christian ethics is to invalidate this knowledge.'<sup>6</sup> I know no statement that is more likely to infuriate even the most patient of the non-theistic moralists, and one does not want to arouse the anger of those who have much to teach us. But the destiny of the human race may well depend upon our recognizing the truth to which Bonhoeffer points. When man claims as his rightful possession the knowledge of good and evil, he makes unattainable the very good for which he seeks.

<sup>1</sup> T. Huxley and Julian Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics*, 1893-1943 (1947).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. L. Wittgenstein: 'there are no ethical propositions' (*Tractatus*, 6.42).

<sup>3</sup> B. Blanshard, *Reason and Goodness* (1961), Chap. LX.

<sup>4</sup> B. Russell, *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* (1954), p.25.

<sup>5</sup> C. H. Waddington *The Scientific Attitude* (Pelican, 2nd Ed., 1951), p.32.

<sup>6</sup> D. Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (Eng. Trans. 1955) p.142.

## CHRISTIANITY AND HUMANISM

*William Strawson*

A MODERN HUMANIST writer, describing the symptoms of our modern lack of faith and need for redemption, refers not only to the cult of violence and bestiality in contemporary plays and novels, the emptiness and falsities of present life, but also to 'the helplessness of the historic Churches to give either doctrinal or pastoral guidance to the masses of their faithless faithful'.<sup>1</sup> If such a writer is taken as representative of humanism, it is not easy to dismiss this view with merely a vague charge of ineffectiveness. There is a serious humanism which sincerely attempts to make good the loss of faith in orthodox Christianity which afflicts so large a proportion of Western civilization. It is such a humanism that we are to consider. When Christians use the term 'scientific humanism', it is usually in a sense which implies that this is one of the chief enemies of the faith, and those who appear to be scientific humanists encourage this idea of antagonism to Christianity. Another form of humanism is 'rationalist humanism', such as is purveyed by the Rationalist Press Association in general, and Bertrand Russell in particular. Of this type of humanism, Dorothea Krook has written that it 'is remarkable chiefly for what it ignores of vital human experience and for the lucid confusions of its doctrinal pronouncements'.<sup>2</sup>

Religious humanism merits the close attention of Christians, not only because it claims to attempt to do what orthodox Christianity ought to be doing, but also for its high moral intent. However, we must not assume that because of this concern for morality, religious humanism is the close ally or friend of Christianity, for the ethical codes of Christianity and humanism may be proceeding on parallel lines which cannot meet, however close they seem to run. Humanism is not the friend of religion merely by being moral, for morality itself has been accused of being the enemy of Christianity. 'The proper object of religion is the supernatural—morality is at its very best a superior form of natural life.'<sup>3</sup> This is a warning that neither Christianity nor humanism can properly use morality as the final proof of its own position, nor as the refutation of the other. If Christianity bases all its criticism of humanism on the latter's alleged moral inadequacy, it is inferring that morality is the ultimate test and justification of religion, which is manifestly inadequate as a description of religion. And if humanism could claim to solve the problem of morality without the aid of religion, this would still not demonstrate the effective supersession of religion.

Whether humanism is the friend or enemy of religion is one question to be borne in mind as we proceed with this discussion. But of one fact about humanism there can be no doubt—namely, its widespread incidence, especially in the Western world. Some competent observers estimate that at least half those in the West who can be termed educated are humanists. It does seem justifiable to speak of humanism as the modern philosophy of life, for our contemporaries who pay so scant regard to the practices of organized religion are living in a sort of humanist way, even though they do not so identify themselves. In schools, where definitions are clearer, and positions more rigidly taken, those who do not belong to any organized Christian body are apt to describe themselves as humanists. No doubt this is partly due to the feeling that this sounds more intellectual than to admit to being an agnostic or an atheist, but large numbers of senior scholars (and their teachers) are content to be so named. Something of the attractiveness of the term arises from its apparent positive character; it sounds better to say that you believe in man than to say you don't believe in God. Humanism by its very name is claiming to provide the positive alternative to modern unbelief.

In this essay I propose to discuss the attitude which Christians ought to have towards this philosophy of life, and in order to do this usefully it will be necessary to describe in outline the main affirmations of humanism. As we have already noted, there are several forms of this view, and in some respects the different types of humanism vary quite considerably. But in the main assertions there is a large measure of agreement, and it is these main assertions which we must now consider.

*Firstly*, humanism asserts that all belief in the supernatural is misleading, for the supernatural is a myth which cannot be substantiated in fact. The only reality is within human life, and there is neither need nor possibility of calling upon any forces outside man to meet man's situation. Humanists generally do not argue this position; they take it for granted and regard it as axiomatic. But in so far as it is argued, there are two ways in which it is presented. On the one hand, recourse is made to the oft-repeated assertion that the existence of God,

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or the supernatural, cannot be proved, and therefore no such entity exists. On the other hand, in a sort of complementary approach, it is asserted that the hypothesis of God is not necessary to explain natural phenomena. The humanist is in the apparently happy position of being able to say that what does not exist is not necessary, anyway, so we can continue on our way undisturbed by the realization of the non-existence of God. It is to be noted that this is in fact a negative beginning, which somewhat belies the idea that humanism is thoroughly positive in its attitudes. But we will leave the examination of this most important assertion of humanism until later. It is necessary to note that by denying the reality of the supernatural, humanism is not denying the existence of all non-material reality. Indeed, it strongly asserts the reality and significance of an order of values, which have redemptive effect. These values are superior to the values of material existence, in so far as they prove effective to meet the needs of man, and because of this superiority, these values are absolutely real, binding and valid. But they need no supernatural hypothesis to support or confirm them; they stand securely because of their effect in human experience.

*Secondly*, humanism insists that this present life is all that we can know, and it is enough to meet all our needs and aspirations. This involves a dual assertion of the value of this present existence, and a complete denial of any future existence. On the one hand, this present life is full of absorbing interest, and is potentially completely satisfying for us. Humanism affirms that the natural order is continually challenging man's knowledge, and can provide for all man's needs. Along with the emphasis on natural beauty goes an equal stress on the satisfaction man can gain through the visual arts, through music and literature. It is interesting to notice that some of the great names in English literature are quoted in support of the humanist tradition, including Shelley, George Eliot, Swinburne, Hardy and A. E. Housman. Among musicians, Beethoven is claimed to have expressed humanist themes in at least three of his symphonies, and much modern art appears to have broken away completely from the religious associations which formerly provoked and conditioned some of the world's great masterpieces. The new scientific revolution, which is continually providing more knowledge about the natural order, and yet admits that it has so far only scratched the surface of all the wonders and mysteries involved in the order of which man is part, encourages man to think that this world provides more than enough of absorbing interest for the whole of his life. And when there is added to this knowledge which is continually growing, but can hardly be conceived as ever complete, the challenge to action involved in making this world a place in which the full faculties of all men will be able to be fully developed, the humanist finds this world quite adequate to every need and hope and ambition which he may have. 'This life is all, and it is enough' is the triumphant exultation of the modern humanist.

On the other hand, humanism denies the necessity or possibility of any existence beyond this. It asserts that in the past men have longed for a future life because they have not found satisfaction on earth. J. S. Mill expressed this point of view in memorable words: 'Those who have had their happiness can bear to part with existence; but it is hard to die without ever having lived.'<sup>4</sup> The horror of death and personal destruction arises because man feels he has been cheated in this life, and these final enemies, if they are final, exclude all

possibility of recompense. Man who has missed the joy of living cannot bear to face the prospect of ceasing to be when he dies, and so he must believe in immortality. But the humanist, who has found real satisfaction in this life, can face death with perfect calmness, knowing that it is the end. Again, humanism is in the happy position of saying that what is not possible is not necessary, for some humanists insist that a future life is impossible anyway. The ground for this view is that in this life body and mind are so intimately linked together that it is inconceivable that the mind should continue to exist when the body dies. It is pointed out how close is the reaction between man's body and his mental and spiritual states, and this is taken to indicate that as body and mind live together, so they inevitably die together. Humanism regards this 'proof' of the impossibility of a future life as a telling blow against Christianity in particular, since this religion, like so many others, owes its existence to man's fear of death, and his refusal to face the possibility of extinction when this life ends. But, the humanist avers, if this whole problem is unreal, then the religion which has been developed expressly to answer it, is shown to be unnecessary, and must be abandoned.

*Thirdly*, humanism takes a challenging position with regard to morality. Serious humanists recognize that man needs an effective moral code if he is to live successfully in a community. The sanction for such a moral code in the past has been a supernatural religion, through which it has been asserted that the basis of morality is a divinely given law, to which man is bound to give obedience. The question then arises: What sanction can take the place of discredited supernaturalism? The humanist claims that such a sanction exists within man; he has no need to look outside himself for it. In particular, man is bound to accept the supremacy of love as the basis of true morality. Love is the ultimate truth to which all men naturally give allegiance. It is the supreme value of the transcendent order of values to which the humanist gives allegiance, and it lies within the human, not the divine realm.<sup>5</sup> In contrast to the Christian, the humanist believes that there is a continuity between the transcendent order and the human exercise of love. The love which is found in human relations is not derived from transcendent love; it is that transcendent love. It is in this connexion that humanists come closest to recognizing the value of the life of Christ. This life they consider to be a supreme example of the power of love, for even when the accretions of supernaturalism are removed from the story of Jesus, there is left a shining example of the supreme power of love, expressed in a human life. There is no point in modern humanist writing which is more significant than that at which it is emphasized that humanists must take the life of Jesus much more seriously. But this does not mean that disbelief in the supernatural is to be abandoned. It means that the humanist thinks that the life of Jesus is of the utmost importance, even though He cannot in any sense be regarded as divine. The validity of the message of Jesus is not guaranteed by His supernatural status, but rather by the intrinsic worth of the message of love. It is recognized by religious humanists that Jesus is the outstanding example of the power of love, because He not only taught that love is supreme, but died to prove it. The death of Jesus has redemptive worth because it reveals the true depth of love by which Jesus lived. Some humanists, such as D. H. Lawrence, think that during His life Jesus had an inadequate view of love,

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because His conception was limited to self-giving. But after the Resurrection Jesus learned that love is also receiving. Unfortunately, this exposition is bound up with Lawrence's idea of the redeeming power of sexual love, which makes his book *The Man Who Died* extremely difficult for a Christian to regard as other than blasphemous. Thus there is a definite theory of morals behind the view of such a person as Mrs Knight, and this view merits more than the usual carping criticism levelled at it by Christians, that without religion morals do not exist. The question to be faced is whether love is part of human nature, and whether it is a self-evident basis for man's life, as well as whether man will give obedience to it without being convinced that it is of divine origin and authority.

*Fourthly*, humanism is incurably optimistic about man and his prospects. While admitting that heredity and environment have a considerable influence on man's life, and that no decision is unmotivated or uninfluenced by previous actions, the humanist affirms that man's conviction that he does make real choices is not an illusion. By exercising these choices, man can radically change his environment, for his powers are not limited by thoughts of dependence on divine help or guidance. Man is capable of making those necessary changes in the conditions of life which will make it possible for him to live a full life. When man realizes that no help is available outside himself he realizes his potentiality, and can in fact meet the challenges which life presents to him. This challenge makes life worthwhile and satisfying. When it is objected that humanism does not seem to have made very much progress, the humanist replies that humanism is still largely impeded by outdated supernaturalism, and further it is in an emergent stage, and therefore cannot be expected to be in a position to supply all the answers immediately. But to the humanist the way ahead is quite clear. Man must trust in his own strength, for there is none other; he must apply to every part of life those scientific principles which have begun to reveal the secrets of matter, and give man power over matter. Especially, these principles must be applied to all material and political problems, in the certainty that through scientific approaches a solution will be found. This optimism does not extend to all humanists, some of whom, such as Thomas Hardy and Jean-Paul Sartre, are deeply pessimistic about man's future. But on the whole humanism is optimistic in asserting that all human problems are patent of a human solution. In so far as this optimistic approach is an answer to modern scepticism, it has to be welcomed. There are so many today who have no hope at all, that any man with hope, however shaky in its foundations, must be welcome. Allied to this is humanism's concern that truly human values must not be overwhelmed by materialism and mechanism, as is so easy in this technical age.

#### A CHRISTIAN CRITIQUE OF HUMANISM

It is obvious that anything like a full critique of humanism cannot be attempted in one article. But there are two main approaches which must be present whenever the Christian attitude to humanism is considered. The first is pragmatic, the second is metaphysical.

The pragmatic approach has many limitations, to which we will presently refer. But it must be allowed that it is legitimate to offer pragmatic criticism of a view which claims to be thoroughly pragmatic itself. One of the many sources from which humanism derives its philosophical basis is the pragmatism of



F. C. S. Schiller, who described his philosophy as Humanism. The emphasis on fulfilment of human need as a test of the truth of dogma, which Matthew Arnold used in *Literature and Dogma*, is, of course, a thoroughly pragmatic approach.

How does humanism stand up to its own pragmatic test? Two illustrations will help to answer this. One of humanism's assertions is that if man is educated in the right way, he will live by the rule of love, for the sake of the community. What evidence is there that humanism is any more successful in this high aim than the supernaturalism which it so firmly rejects? There is no need to condemn all humanists as non-moral, to see that on the whole humanism takes too optimistic a view of human nature, and too little account of the down-drag of selfishness which has to be defeated if man is to live by love. It is difficult to maintain that modern man, released from bondage to supernaturalism, is more concerned for his fellow-man than those who still believe in God. The second illustration refers to the view, seriously advanced by humanists, that sexual love is redemptive and restorative in its effects. This is the view which D. H. Lawrence advocated in many of his novels, and as a serious view of life it is worthy of some consideration. But how few of those who have recently read *Lady Chatterley's Lover* will have gained this impression? For many people it is an encouragement to lust rather than to a serious view of the relations between men and women. This supposedly high-minded attempt to expound a view of life is not much more than pornography to the majority of its readers. This suggests that even if humanist ethics are effective for the highly educated who can understand their implications, for the majority of people they are simply not any help at all as a guide to right living. And this is only one illustration of the general truth that humanist ethics are just not effective without some supernatural basis. Without belief in some supernatural order, most men are lost in a morass of animal passion.

Yet however strongly humanism can be condemned on these lines, the pragmatic argument is not sufficiently radical as a Christian critique. For one thing, humanism can always plead that it is still in an emergent stage, and that some of its ineffectiveness is due to the shackles of supernaturalism which have not yet been released. More seriously, humanism can ask whether the record of Christianity is really so good, after so long a period of use. The pragmatic argument is apt to rebound upon those who use it, like a boomerang. At any rate, if the Christian faith could only be verified by pragmatic arguments, it would not have very secure foundations. And we must also remember the limitations of saying that humanism is not effective. Even if we can show this to be so, we have not thereby proved the truth of supernaturalism. Neither is Christianity proved to be the right answer just because humanism is the wrong one.

We must therefore turn to the metaphysical question for a more radical examination of humanism. We have already said that humanism takes it to be axiomatic that the supernatural is a myth. How do we answer that? Not, I think, by bringing out of hiding the old theistic proofs and presenting them in a new dress, although these arguments have still great significance in Christian apologetics. But in this connexion we have to make a different approach. Instead of trying to convince the humanist by argument that there is a supernatural, we shall be better employed in pointing out that he has radically misunderstood the Christian view of the supernatural. Most humanist discussion

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of the supernatural takes for granted two assertions, both of which involve a serious misunderstanding of the Christian position. To the humanist, God is on the one hand an explanation which can be dispensed with, and on the other hand an encumbrance to be got rid of if at all possible so that man can be free of the limitations which belief in God involves. But neither of these views are true according to the Christian. When Laplace loftily replied to Napoleon that he had no need of the hypothesis of God in his view of the universe, he was revealing a profound misunderstanding of the Christian view of God. God is not an explanation, to be dispensed with if a better one is found. God is a Person, known in personal encounter through Christ. To know God in Christ is to find the clue to many of life's mysteries, but it does not involve the assertion that God is the great explanation and nothing else.

The other misunderstanding of humanism is a curious assumption which never seems to be challenged. This is that God is an encumbrance, and if only man can get rid of this limitation he can pursue human values to his heart's content. Such a view of God is, of course, quite incomprehensible to a Christian. When the humanist asserts that he has conferred a great benefit on the race by showing that we have no longer need to bother about God, he must be thinking in terms of a God who cannot be understood, whose capricious ways are a continual embarrassment to a believer, and who is continually preventing man from doing what he wants to do. Could anything be further from the Christian view of God? If only the humanist would realize it, he is merely showing how little he knows of God when he makes these assumptions. Sometimes one suspects that behind all the bravado of the humanist claim to freedom from the supernatural there is the sense of loss which cannot always be denied. Is this why the humanist credits nature with semi-divine status, and is so sure that love is an absolute to which all men must naturally give allegiance?

It is not enough merely to answer the arguments of humanism. We must be more positive than we have been in the past. For instance, we must show that true human values are not best secured when there is no belief in the supernatural, but that man can only know the value of his life when he sees himself as a child of God. Supernaturalism is a guarantee of human values, not a denial of them. If the Greeks were the true originators of a concern for human values, we must remember that 'the Greeks were as continuously and deeply concerned with the supernatural as any people in history'.<sup>6</sup>

Humanism presents a challenge to Christianity for which it ought to be deeply thankful. In brief, it seems as if humanism is pressing us to consider more deeply four questions:

(a) Why do we believe in God? The answer to this must surely involve more emphasis on experience than we are giving at present. Pragmatic and rational answers are important, but they cannot take the place of a sense of encounter with God, which is the essential basis of Christian belief.

(b) Are Christians exhibiting that fullness of life which they should know in Christ? Humanism is a view of life involving real impoverishment. Unless millions of men and women have been deluded, man is capable of fellowship with God, and without this, his highest attainment, man's life is grievously restricted. But is it not true that many Christians think in terms of restriction rather than fullness when they consider their life in Christ?

(c) Are we too reticent about our belief in a future life? The humanist is wrong in supposing that the Christian faith is only interested in the future life, but he is surely right in seeing the great importance of this belief to a Christian. We do not best deal with the humanist criticism by ignoring this part of our faith, but by knowing its true basis and justification. It is noticeable that most of the humanist criticism is based on the idea that Christians believe in natural immortality. If we are to make more of this belief, we must decide whether our ground is natural immortality or life with God in Christ, begun now, and not terminated by death. In defending natural immortality we may be defending the indefensible.

(d) Is our Christianity too other-worldly? Humanism has gained a good deal of support through the failure of Christianity to be related to this life. Yet Christianity ought to be thoroughly this-worldly, seeing that it accepts the world as the creation of God, and especially because it asserts that the Son of God was Incarnate in this life. Christianity is a spiritual religion which does not shun the material. Therefore many of the aspirations of humanism, its hopes for a better world, can be fully shared by Christians. Indeed, Christians ought to be in the forefront of those who are seeking a better world, because they believe this to be the will of God.

<sup>1</sup> Dorothea Krook, *Three Traditions of Moral Thought*, p.296.

<sup>2</sup> op. cit., p.7.

<sup>3</sup> M. Pradines, *Esprit de la Religion*.

<sup>4</sup> J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Religion*, pp.118-19.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. D. Krook, op. cit., p.252.

<sup>6</sup> Moses Hadas, *Humanism*, p.10.

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## DIAKONIA<sup>1</sup>

*C. E. B. Cranfield*

MATTHEW 25<sub>31-46</sub>

I AM NOT GOING to attempt in the space of a single sermon to indicate even in outline all the treasures of this peculiarly rich and suggestive passage. I shall only try to draw out some of the things which it has to say to us.

I hope I may be forgiven if I begin by saying something (necessarily a little bit complicated) about two exegetical questions, which are of vital importance for the interpretation of the passage as a whole. They are: (i) Who are meant by 'all the nations' in verse 32 ('and before him shall be gathered all the nations . . .')? and (ii) Who are meant by 'these my brethren, even these least' in verse 40 ('Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me') and the similar 'these least' in verse 45?

With regard to the first of these questions, the conceivable meanings of 'all the nations' are: first, all the Gentiles, as opposed to Jews; second, all the heathen, as opposed to the disciples of Jesus, the Christian Church, so including the non-believing Jews; and, third, all men, including the disciples of Jesus. Of these, although the first and the second have recently been favoured by some New Testament scholars, the last is, I think, the only one that is really possible. For the passage as it stands is surely to be understood as a solemn appeal and warning to those who are being addressed, an appeal to them to be the sort of people who will at the last be counted righteous and a warning to them not to be the sort of people who at the last will be rejected. If that is so, it follows that the people whom Jesus is addressing are intended to see themselves as included among those who are going to be judged; in other words, they must be included under the term 'all the nations'. And it is clear that the evangelist, at any rate, understood this discourse as having been addressed to the disciples; for he has made it the last section and climax of a great block of teaching which he specifically represents as being addressed to the disciples 'privately'.<sup>2</sup> For Matthew, at any rate, then, I think 'all the nations' meant 'all men', including Christians. And, while it certainly seems to be true that the evangelists have sometimes applied to the Church teaching which was not originally addressed to disciples, it is, I think, extraordinarily difficult to imagine circumstances in the ministry of Jesus in which He is likely to have addressed anything like this present discourse to anyone other than His disciples. So I would conclude that, if this particular phrase goes back to our Lord Himself—and I see no reason why it should not—then for Him as for Matthew 'all the nations' included His disciples.

The second question can, fortunately, be answered much more briefly. Of the two conceivable meanings of 'these my brethren, even these least'—on the

one hand, disciples in need, and, on the other hand, the needy generally, irrespective of whether they are Christ's disciples or not—although some scholars have recently favoured the former meaning, the latter is surely the only one that is really possible; for, while all the individuals denoted by 'all the nations' (whichever sense we give it) would be sure to have had some opportunity to succour a fellow man in need, it is obvious that they certainly could not all be assumed to have had a chance to succour a needy Christian. Thus, if 'these my brethren, even these least' referred only to Christians, such a succouring or not succouring could not possibly be a universally applicable criterion.

We conclude then that this passage refers not to a judgement either of the Gentiles or of all non-Christians, according to their treatment of Christians in need or of their needy fellow men generally, but to a judgement of all men, including Christians, according to their treatment of their needy fellow men, irrespective of whether these are Christians or not.

It is now high time to ask: What are some of the things which this passage has to say to us?

In the first place, it directs our attention to *the future*—to the time when He, who in His earthly ministry was the lowly and suffering Son of man, and who even now that He is at the right hand of the Father, exalted and reigning, the One to whom all authority has already been given in heaven and on earth, the ruler of the kings of the earth, is still not yet manifested as King, shall at last be seen to be King. (Notice how He who in verse 31 is spoken of as 'Son of man' is in verse 34 referred to as 'the King'.) It points to the Parousia, the glorious second coming of Christ, the end of history. At the very moment that Jesus is about to face His bitterest and most extreme humiliation, His arrest, trial and death as a malefactor, He looks forward with unshaken confidence to the moment of His final and unambiguous manifestation as King of all.

But this manifestation of Jesus Christ as King will mean for us men the final judgement. When He comes again with glory, it will be to judge both the quick and dead: '... then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth his sheep from the goats. . .'. The passage we are considering, though often referred to as the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, is not so much a parable as a straight discourse, a sermon—if you like—about the final judgement. The illustration of the shepherd and his sheep and goats takes only one and a half verses. Its purpose is simply to indicate how easily and unhesitatingly Christ will carry out the final division of men. The shepherd has no difficulty in distinguishing the sheep from the goats; he can tell the one from the other at a glance. So swift and sure will be the division of men by Christ in the last judgement.

The passage is impressive not only for its moral grandeur and deep earnestness, but also for its restraint and sobriety. Here are no vivid colours, no picturesque details, nothing of the bizarre fantasy characteristic of Jewish apocalyptic. In its restraint and sobriety, its seriousness and earnestness, this passage reminds us of something which much of our present-day British Christianity in its easy-going superficiality tends to ignore. It reminds us that the all-important question for each one of us is: What will the King have to say to us when at the last we appear before Him? Shall we be among those to whom He will say,

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'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world', or among those to whom He will say, 'Depart from me, ye cursed. . . '?

And do not let us fail to see that in thus asserting so earnestly the ultimate accountability of each individual for himself, our Lord has given to the individual man the charter of his inalienable dignity. The man who knows that at the last he will have to answer before Christ the King for the use he has made of his life and his opportunities, and that he will not then be able to shrug off his responsibility upon others, knows also his own human dignity. Here is reason for standing erect in the face of coercion, for being a real man and not a mere conforming shadow, for refusing to yield either to a tyrant's tortures or the inanity of a society dominated by such things as hidden persuaders and the craze for status and prestige.

But, in the second place, this passage drives us back relentlessly to *the present*. Here is no apocalypse such as might gratify idle curiosity or foster a smug assurance. Jesus gives His disciples no encouragement to indulge in fanciful speculation about the future. Rather He directs their attention back to the present. For it is in the present that their eternal destiny is being decided. It is here and now in this life that we encounter our fellow men in their need and wretchedness, the hungry and the thirsty, the strangers, the naked, the sick and the prisoners, and can minister to them—or neglect to do so. In this judgement scene, sketched with such simplicity and restraint, everything is represented as depending on whether or not men have in their lifetime shown compassion to their fellow men in distress.

Judgement according to works this certainly is, but not in any legalistic sense. It is not said here that the righteous have earned their reward, that their deeds of mercy are meritorious works for which they deserve everlasting life. It may perhaps be fair to argue, as some commentators have done, that the very fact that the King bids them inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world points back behind their actions to the undeserved grace of God. But, however that may be, we must surely understand this passage in the light of the rest of our Lord's teaching. Elsewhere Jesus says to His disciples: 'When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do.'<sup>3</sup> So I take it that in this passage the righteous are not thought of as having put the King under an obligation to themselves by their works of mercy, but rather simply as having shown by their works the reality of their faith. We can never by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and other such actions, earn our salvation; but, if we truly believe in Jesus Christ, if we have any real faith at all, we cannot help but begin to be open to the need and distress of our neighbours. The presence of such openness may be evidence of a genuine faith; its absence is a conclusive proof that any faith we profess to have is merely counterfeit.

But Jesus is here not only bringing home to His disciples the decisive importance of the present and the fact that in the final judgement men will be divided according to whether or not they have in this life shown compassion to their needy fellow men. He is also disclosing a mystery to them. In this judgement scene those who think that they are meeting their Judge for the first time learn that they have actually been meeting Him during the whole



course of their lives—without recognizing Him. For us it is the secret that in the present time the Lord Jesus Christ is not only at the right hand of the Father, but also comes to us again and again not only in the Word and Sacraments, but also in the flesh and blood of our fellow men in their need and distress—in the flesh and blood of individual men and women and children in their wretchedness. To say that they are His ambassadors and that therefore what we do or omit to do to them is counted as done or not done to Him does not, I think, exhaust the meaning of what is said here. Something more than this would seem to be intended—namely, that there is a real presence of the exalted Christ in the persons of His brethren in their need and distress comparable with His real presence in the Word and Sacraments, that as truly as He is present mysteriously and hiddenly, in His freedom and lordship, in the Holy Scriptures read and heard, by means of broken human words, and in the Holy Supper by means of bread and wine, so truly is He present mysteriously and hiddenly, in His freedom and lordship, in our daily life by means of our fellow men who need our assistance.

This presence of the King in the persons of the least of His brethren is indeed a mystery, which the world as a whole will not know till the final judgement takes place. But, although Jesus in this judgement scene represents the righteous as well as the unrighteous as not having recognized who it was with whom they were dealing, it is perfectly clear that He does not want the mystery to be hidden from His disciples. The whole purpose of this discourse on the final judgement is to reveal the mystery to them. He is preparing them for the time when He will have left them—for the time between His departure and His coming again in glory. That time is to be filled by His disciples with a loving ministering to Him in the persons of His needy brethren.

To know this mystery is to know that in our service of the needy all thought of patronizing is once and for all excluded. How could we feel ourselves superior to those who come to us clothed with the majesty of Christ Himself, as persons who are His ambassadors, or rather whose suffering flesh veils His mysterious presence? To the world they may seem to be in the position of beggars who must humbly crave our favour; but the eye of faith sees in them the Lord Jesus Christ, who comes to claim that which is His by right. They have an absolute right to our service in virtue of His decision to be thanked and loved in them.

To know this mystery is, further, to be set free to serve our fellow men in their need with joy and thankfulness. For, seeing that our debt to Christ is so great that we can never cease to be His debtors, how could we not welcome the persons of His needy brethren with joy and thankfulness as His gracious gift to us of the opportunity to love and serve and thank Him? Eloquently does John Calvin sum up what this passage has to say to us about the present in his comment on verse 45:

We must be prodigiously insensitive, if compassion be not drawn from our bowels by this statement, that Christ is either neglected or honoured in the persons of those who need our assistance. So then, when we are reluctant to assist the poor, may the Son of God come before our eyes, to whom to refuse anything is a monstrous sacrilege.

I come now to the third, and last, part of my sermon. That all this applies to us as individuals is obvious, and I am not going to labour the point. Most of

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you, no doubt, are as aware as I am of the bitter need of our times, of the thirty to forty millions of refugees, of the two-thirds of the world's population either seriously under-nourished or actually starving, of the multitudes who suffer preventable disease for lack of medical supplies and care. You will have read, as I have, of Algerian children trying to relieve their hunger by eating earth, of people dying of starvation in the Congo, of famine in China, of the desperate continuing poverty of India. And it is unlikely that there is anyone here who is quite indifferent to all this human suffering. Many of you, no doubt, will already have been generous in your response to the various humanitarian appeals. With regard to this personal, individual aspect I shall do no more than simply put into words one question which seems to me to arise naturally at this point. It is this: Does not the amount that we give for the relief of our fellow human beings, when we look at it again in the light of the passage which we have been considering and in that light compare it with what we spend on our comforts and luxuries and pleasures, begin to look rather less generous—perhaps even paltry and mean?

But there is another aspect, about which I want to speak in the remaining minutes. It seems to me that this passage, as well as putting urgent questions to us about our lives as individuals, has some very important things to say to us about the corporate life of the Church.

It is not without significance that the verb (translated 'minister' in our Bible) which is used in verse 44 as a general term to cover all the various services to the needy which the King has mentioned is the verb *diakonein* ('Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?'); for this verb, together with its cognates, has had a special importance in the Church's life and thought. These words are quite often used in the New Testament in their original connotation—that is, with reference to waiting at table; they are also used generally of Christ's service of men, and of men's service of Christ and of God; but they are most characteristically used with reference to the loving, practical service of the needy and afflicted and the administration of the material resources of the Christian community. The noun *diakonos* (which we have in English in the form 'deacon') came to be used specially of those ministers of the early Church whose function it was to be the agents of the Church's charitable work and to administer its funds, and the abstract noun *diakonia* denotes specially that sort of ministry.

It seems to me that the first thing which our text has to say to us here is that *diakonia*, the service of the needy and afflicted, ought to be of central importance in the life of every congregation. If the mystery which this text reveals is really true, if Christ Himself is really present in the persons of the least of His brethren, then to minister to Him in their persons cannot be only a matter for Christians as individuals; it must also be an essential and important part of the corporate life of the Christian community. To suppose that the Lord Jesus Christ is pleased with a congregation's public worship, however beautifully and solemnly it be executed, if the congregation is all the time neglecting Him as He comes to it in the persons of the distressed is clearly illusion. And a collection every now and then for charitable purposes hardly measures up to what is required. What our text suggests is surely rather a diligent and continual service, a never ceasing to be on the watch for opportunities to serve the afflicted.

But for this imagination is necessary. Times change, and new forms of service have to take the place of old. It is true that a welfare state such as our own does much of the humanitarian work which the Church used to do; but the assumption that all that needs to be done for the weak, the handicapped, and the misfits of society is being done, however agreeable it may be to the complacency of the well-established, is, of course, untrue. For, in spite of all that the state does—and Christians should certainly be glad that it does so much—there remains a vast amount of human distress close to our doors. I mention just one example—the plight of the discharged prisoner, who steps out from prison often with no home to go to and with only a few shillings in his pocket, to start seeking a job in a society which not unnaturally is suspicious of ex-prisoners, often to find that, as soon as his immediate past is known, the doors of opportunity shut in his face. It is hardly surprising that very many ex-prisoners are back in gaol within a few weeks of being discharged. Had our Churches been awake, many a congregation or local council of Churches would surely by now have established its own small family-type hostel for discharged prisoners (on the lines of the few which are in existence), where the ex-prisoner might have been given that sense of belonging, of being loved, the absence of which may well have been the root cause of his anti-social behaviour. And lists of members willing to employ ex-prisoners could have been compiled, or, at the least, much more help could have been given to the voluntary society which tries with inadequate funds to do something for discharged prisoners. Many other examples of need close at hand will suggest themselves, wherever a living congregation understands the meaning of *diakonia*.

But at the present time the greatest need and the greatest opportunities for service undoubtedly lie further afield, among the refugees and in the underdeveloped territories. Alas for the congregation which is so parochial in its vision as to feel that its opportunities for *diakonia* are less today than they used to be and not to realize that they have in fact been multiplied many thousand times by modern means of communication and transport!

Secondly, it seems to me that this text raises for us the question of the diaconate. Admittedly the important thing is that *diakonia* should be practised in, and by, every congregation and parish, and it certainly can be practised even where there are no office-bearers charged with a special responsibility for it. A congregation does not necessarily fail to serve the needy because it has no deacons. But may it not be that, where the office of deacon has been discontinued or has been transformed into something quite different from what it was in the first few centuries, it is more easy for the function of *diakonia* itself to be neglected? And may not the fact that in some Churches the diaconate has become merely a stage on the way to the priesthood, while in others it has become wholly concerned with ministers' stipends and the upkeep of church buildings, point to the presence of a very real element of disorder in our Church life? Perhaps in our present preoccupation with questions of Presbyterians and Methodists taking episcopacy into their systems, and Anglicans' taking the eldership into theirs, we have given less attention than we should have done to the question of deacons.<sup>4</sup> Does not our text at least raise the question whether it may not be quite as important for all the Churches in Britain to consider seriously taking into their systems a diaconate primarily concerned with ministering

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to Christ in the persons of the needy, such as the New Testament diaconate seems, despite opinions to the contrary, to have been, as it is for some of them to consider taking episcopacy, and others the eldership, into their systems?

Thirdly, and finally, the mystery of Christ's presence in all who are needy and wretched cannot be irrelevant to the realm of ecclesiastical finance. The disturbing questions which our text raises here and the need for a radical, theological rethinking of the whole business of the Church's management of its material resources which it discloses can, I think, hardly be more vividly suggested than by a quotation from St Ambrose's *de officiis ministrorum*.<sup>5</sup> His defence of himself against those who had reproached him for having broken up sacred vessels for the ransom of prisoners includes these sentences:

The Church has gold not to hoard but to distribute and to succour those in need. . . . Would not the Lord say, Why have you allowed so many poor to die of hunger? You certainly had gold, with which to have ministered to their sustenance. Why have so many captives been taken away for sale and not redeemed? . . . It had been better to preserve living than metallic vessels. These charges you will not be able to answer. For what would you say—I feared that the temple of God would lack ornament? He would answer: Sacraments require not gold; and things which are not bought with gold do not satisfy by gold. The ornament of the Sacraments is the redemption of captives.

Of course, the Church must spend a great deal of money on the support of the clergy, the upkeep of church buildings and many other things which are necessary if the Church's mission is to be fulfilled. But our text would seem to suggest that all proposed ecclesiastical expenditure ought to be carefully scrutinized in the light of the claims of human distress throughout the world, and to call in question the use of the Church's money for purposes of prestige, whether of one denomination over against others, or of a congregation in the eyes of the local community, or of the clergy. (And must we not admit that much expenditure which purports to be to the greater glory of God is really for the sake of the prestige of men?) Does not our text also challenge us to ask ourselves very seriously whether there is not an essential truth in the conviction, which was held very strongly by some in the ancient Catholic Church and about which Calvin writes with such obvious warmth in one of the places in the *Institutes*<sup>6</sup> where he is dealing with deacons, the conviction that the possessions of the Church are the patrimony of the poor, and whether for the Church to spend on frivolous or unnecessary purposes, or faithlessly to hoard, its resources, while the hungry starve, is not in fact a misappropriation of that which by right belongs to Christ in His needy ones, and therefore sacrilege?

May we as individuals, and may the whole Church in our country, understand the mystery which this passage discloses, and sincerely, gladly and lovingly minister to the Lord Jesus Christ in the persons of the least of His brethren.

<sup>1</sup> Sermon preached before the University of Cambridge, 5th February, 1961.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 24<sub>3</sub>.

<sup>3</sup> Luke 17<sub>10</sub>.

<sup>4</sup> Though reference should be made to the series of articles in *Theology*, LVIII.403-36, and to the article by J. M. Ross in *S.J.T.*, XII.151-60.

<sup>5</sup> II.xxviii (J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, XVI, column 140).

<sup>6</sup> IV. iv.5-8.

## LIGHT, LIFE AND LOVE

*Claude Curling*

THE COMING of our Lord Jesus Christ was announced to the wisdom of a pagan world by a star—a star that went before the three wise men until it came to rest over the place where the Child was. On clear nights now, we also can see a star moving among the constellations, moving through the houses of the Zodiac, and this is not a thing that has happened before. Unlike Herod, we can ascertain at what time the star appears from our newspapers, but this star itself is a sign that we also, with our wisdom, such as it is, should go again to Bethlehem to the Christ and try to see in His light the meaning of these new things.

The star is a sign of our times. It is a man-made star yet it shines only in the reflected light of the sun. But it symbolizes a new thing—the modification of the heavens. And as the heavens begin to change, so we look back on three centuries of modern science. In 1960 we celebrated the tercentenary of the Royal Society, but no one really knows whether these three centuries have been for good or for evil. We only know that the things that are now happening in science are changing man and changing Nature. Changing man psychologically, and changing man physically, for all of us now have substances within us that were not there in previous generations. The experiments in the testing of atomic bombs have left their physical mark on all of us—a slight mark, but a mark no less.

And again, as man begins to break out of the prison of this world, as he begins the adventure of exploration into space, the psychological shock is nearly as great as that when man discovered that the earth was not the centre of the Universe, but just one planet amongst many, moving around the sun which was one star in the whole Milky Way, and the Milky Way itself one of millions of galaxies in the immensities of space.

In the light of this new knowledge of science, we have to look again at the things which we believe, and, as Dr Raven has recently reminded us, look at them in terms of the new cosmology, new biology and new psychology. I believe that this new knowledge is underlining the gospel; that this universe is everywhere ablaze with light and with love; and that the things which Christ did in His earthly life are patterned also in the universe at large.

General Smuts, in his address to the British Association in 1931, said: 'In this universe man is indeed the offspring of the stars.' That remark contains nearly all I want to say. For it is with stars and atoms, with nuclear power I am concerned. And as a prologue to that, I begin with St Paul's letter to the Ephesians.

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This letter seems to be a summary of Paul's teaching which was addressed not merely to the Ephesians, but to communities scattered all over the Christian world. It was a kind of circular sent out to epitomize the gospel as St Paul had been given it and as he had interpreted it. And in it is summarized the fact of Jesus Christ as it illuminates cosmology, biology, and psychology. St Paul begins with a section on cosmology dealing with the heavenly places, dealing with the summing up, the refocusing, the imaging of all things in Christ, and then at the end of the third chapter he writes these words: 'That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.' And he goes on to psychology and to biology and the whole nature of humanity; he tells us that once we were darkness but now we are light in the Lord; 'walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true)'. He deals with the relationship of love between husband and wife and between Christ and the Church, and finally, of course, concludes with the passage concerned with the whole armour of God. And within Ephesians, therefore, one has a full interpretation in terms of these three things of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. So in terms of Ephesians I want to say as simply as possible what has been happening in these three centuries of science.

There have been in the growth of modern science three great revolutions or displacements associated with the names of Copernicus, Darwin, and Freud. And these three are concerned respectively with light, life, and love. Under the Ptolemaic system men saw the earth as the centre of the universe, but with the newly-invented telescope Galileo and Kepler discovered, in accordance with the Copernican theory, that the sun was the centre of the solar system, that the stars were outside this solar system, and that the earth was not the centre of the universe. So the Copernican revolution was concerned with the movement of the earth amongst the sources of light, amongst the sun and the stars.

The Darwinian revolution was concerned with the origin of life and again it was a displacement. Man was again displaced from the centre of the picture. He had thought his earth was the centre of the universe, and now, with Darwin, he found there had not been a special creation concerned with the beginnings of mankind. And, finally, with Freud, and the psychological revolution attached to his name and to that of Jung, the centre of man's internal universe was displaced as the deep roots of love were re-explored. Man learned how important his relationships, his family life, the things and images amongst which he lived were to the decisions he made. He was not independent of these, and to understand even his own behaviour he must know the roots of love and the experience that lay within him.

So Copernicus, Darwin, and Freud were each concerned in turn with light, with life, and with love. Each of them in turn was opposed by the official Church, and each of them in turn caused a displacement. And it was right that man should be dethroned from his position in the centre of the universe, because that position belongs only to Christ. Professor Torrance has said: 'Christ has become the centre of the universe in such a way that all reality has to be reconstructed around Him.'

From that Copernican revolution you can trace a direct line to the discovery



of nuclear power. It was an experiment in the last century by Michelson and Morley concerned with attempting to detect the movement of the earth among the lights of the universe, among the stars, which led Einstein to formulate his theory which was to become the basis of the discovery of nuclear power. Nuclear power itself is the power of light in the universe. We now know that wherever there is light in the universe, sun-light and star-light, this light is produced by thermo-nuclear power. So that when God said: 'Let there be light,' He instituted nuclear power in the universe. Thermo-nuclear power itself is the basis of all life, because in the stars are built up the elements of the universe. Thermo-nuclear power proceeds by changing hydrogen, the lightest element, into elements which are heavier, particularly carbon and oxygen. Things are arranged in the heart of matter so that there is produced abundant carbon and abundant oxygen, and without these and hydrogen, life, as we know it, is impossible. These are the elements which go into every organism, the elements of which flesh itself is composed. So right from the beginning 'Let there be light' implied 'Let there be life'. Light, even in the physical sense, intended life; intended, therefore we may say, the Incarnation; we are children of light, literally children of light, children of thermo-nuclear power. We have been given on earth this power of light and we have already turned it against ourselves. On the Feast of the Transfiguration, before the people of Hiroshima, the power of light went up and, since it was misused, it was for them the power of death. And I think that just as we have been given the power of light, so in the future we are going to be given the power of life and the power of love.

The President of the Royal Society in his tercentenary lecture, had this to say: 'All the sciences have now converged on the study of life, from the simple cell to that most wonderful of instruments, the human brain.' And elsewhere: 'The keys to unlock atomic energy have placed in man's hands undreamed of powers which he may use for good or evil. The keys which unlock some of the secrets of human personality are slowly being cut, and men may soon be using them to do we know not what.' This concentration on the study of life has already led to the increased understanding of the way in which the defaced image of God is transmitted from generation to generation. We can now see under our electron microscopes, and study by X-rays, the molecule which carries, in the chemical pattern along its double spiral, the whole pattern of human inheritance. This wonderful molecule, capable of duplicating itself millions and millions of times, carries in itself the genetic information that makes us into the human people that we are. Scientists are now trying to discover the language in which that particular pattern is written, and if that language can be discovered, as I think it will be, then indeed something like the power of life will begin to become more than just a distant prospect.

The exploration into the personality has hardly yet begun, though some of its implications have inspired several novels and science fiction stories. But in some strange way we are going to unlock, not only the power of life, but the power of love, power over the hidden depths of the personality. We are going to be able to understand in a new way what it is to be human. And just as nuclear power has begun to transform the whole pattern of our world, so I believe these new powers of life and love will come to influence us all and our life here together.

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This has all been summed up by Christ, because He is the Light of the world, and the stars which enfold us and the sun which shines upon us also shone upon Him. He allowed Himself to be born into a world which He had Himself made. The Incarnation is enfolded by the Creation. And indeed the Incarnation is not just an interruption into a world given to man as the stage for some miserable drama; incarnation, creation, and redemption are not three processes, but one. Just as God the Father who created the world, the Holy Spirit, by whom Christ was conceived in Mary, and Christ, who gave Himself for us on the Cross, are three in one, so are creation, incarnation, and redemption; they belong together, and Christ recapitulates in Himself the complete process of history. He takes upon Himself the pattern of Adam, as Mary takes upon herself the pattern of Eve, and in the story of the Incarnation, the story of the Creation is repatterned. Austin Farrer has pointed out how in St Matthew's and St Mark's Gospels the opening chapters are patterned according to the opening chapters of the Bible. In Luke and in Matthew the genealogical tables seem to imply that Christ has taken upon Himself all that was implied by the generations that went before Him. And in Luke, just as the Spirit of God overshadows the waters in creation, so the Holy Spirit, the power from on high, overshadows Mary as the act of incarnation begins. So what we read in John is indeed the truth; 'Without Him was not anything made that was made.' Even what we know today of nuclear power is summed up in Christ, because the very images of fusion and fission, the making or the building up of matter and the breaking of matter, these are in Christ's life. In the fusion between God and man, the fusion between sperm and egg which is the beginning of us all was undertaken by Christ, and His crucifixion is somehow aligned with the fact of fission, the splitting of the rocks, the breaking of bread, the breaking of flesh. 'This is my body broken for you.'

Let me just summarize what I have said. Man stands between the atom and the stars, between the very small and the very large, and I have been trying to show that the whole created order, in atom and in stars, has as its point, as its climax, the Incarnation, the Christ, God made man, the human flesh of Jesus, and when the Godhead declared, 'Let us make man in our own image,' the coming of Christ was already intended. The sun and the stars are sources of light in the universe, and their light is produced by the power that lies in the nucleus, in the heart of matter, in the heart of each atom. When God said, 'Let there be light,' He also proposed to bring into being matter as we now know it. The range of chemical elements, which make up all the things amongst which we exist, is just that pattern of matter which is needed for the coming of life. When God said, 'Let there be light,' He knew the power He used for light would produce also the flesh needed for life. 'Let there be light' implies, 'Let there be life', and since Christ gave Himself for us, since man took God into his own hands and slew Him as God took man into His own hands and saved him, life also implies love. God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, the Light of the world, to give up His life for love of men, that all men may live.

And our choice, therefore, is just this. We may make or unmake in each of us and in others around us the actual state of affairs which is a city. We may see shining in our eyes and in our faces, the light of Christ's glory; we may allow God to draw us to Himself by threads of light woven by love into life eternal. Or

we can allow ourselves to slip beneath the depths of darkness where love only exists as hate, life as continuing death. We may go, if we choose, in fear and joy along the narrow path of exchange and learning of others how to learn and live in others, and there is gaiety as well as absurdity, splendour as well as contrition, on the road to the Kingdom. And if we so choose, we go where Christ has been and where He is, and we are only able to be what we are because He was and is what now and always He will be. For He is the same yesterday, today and for ever. He has drawn all men unto Him and He has summed up all things within Himself.

Recently C. S. Lewis has written a book on the four types of love and he says this: 'Lovers are normally face to face absorbed in each other; friends side by side absorbed in some common interest; above all Eros (while it lasts) is necessarily between two only.' We are called by Christ to be not only His friends, but to be His lovers, and to become included within His whole body. Two friends face together, side by side, the light; two lovers find their love face to face; but beyond these two relationships, there is one of common flesh, there is one which is a marriage, in which two are neither side by side, face to face, back to back, but co-inherent, living each other's life, dying each other's death. And we are called into this relationship of love, and in that relationship of love we have again to go to Bethlehem.

As we go to Bethlehem with the star and with the atoms, and kneel before the manger, as we see the Christ crucified and there is darkness, matter breaks apart and sight can scarce be borne; and then, with the stars and the atoms, as the new life of the resurrection begins, so we come to know the full meaning of that love which began when the light entered the world as the life of Jesus Christ. And as we begin to know this, then indeed the wisdom of our generation is submitted again to the fact of Christ.

## DYING AND RISING WITH CHRIST

*T. Francis Glasson*

IT IS PERHAPS natural that we should think in the first place of baptism in connexion with this subject. The remarkable fact must be admitted that there are many examples of initiation which carry the significance of death, and some would explain Christian initiation from this direction. In primitive religions there are rites of puberty which imply the death of the candidate as a child and his passing to manhood. It is said that in the Congo adolescents were taken by the priests into the forests for a long period; they were taught to feign death, and when they returned they behaved as though they had forgotten their former life. *The Golden Bough* has a section on this theme of death and resurrection with evidence drawn from the tribes of many countries; Frazer's own explanation connects the custom with totemistic beliefs.<sup>1</sup>

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Some of the mystery religions apparently adopted a similar scheme, imposing their own meaning upon it. There is a famous account of the initiation of Lucius, who at one point is told that 'the actual transmission of the mystery is celebrated in the likeness of a voluntary death and a safety given on sufferance'.<sup>2</sup> Attempts are sometimes made to connect such conceptions with the dying and rising of a god. Now, it is true that the vegetation gods came in the course of time to be linked with resurrection; and in Egypt a person who was literally dead was identified with Osiris as part of the funeral rites, in the hope that the resurrection of the god would in some way be conveyed to the dead man. But this is quite different from the initiation of a living person. As H. G. Marsh has written: 'No known pagan mystery taught of an initiate dying and rising with his deity after the manner suggested by Paul's words.'<sup>3</sup> In spite of superficial similarities, there is no need to understand Romans 6 in the light of the mysteries.<sup>4</sup>

Let us look more closely at Christian baptism as a representation of death and resurrection. We may recall at the outset that our Lord spoke of His own death as a baptism: 'I have a baptism to be baptized with and how am I straitened till it be accomplished' (Lk 12<sub>50</sub>). This may reflect Old Testament passages about a man being overwhelmed with the floods of disaster; and it may also imply that the death of Christ was His own entrance upon a fuller ministry, as W. F. Flemington has emphasized.<sup>5</sup> Again in Mark 10<sub>38</sub> Jesus asks: 'Are you able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' As Stauffer puts it, Jesus calls His dying a baptism; Paul calls our baptism a dying.

The apostle appears to regard the passing into the waters and the re-emergence of the candidate as showing forth pictorially death and resurrection; and it is usually thought that immersion is implied by the language of Romans 6 and Colossians 2 and 3: 'Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.' In the course of time the usages of this rite were amplified and became very impressive. Cyril of Jerusalem and others have graphically described how the candidate would first face west as the region of darkness, and renounce the works of the devil; then he would turn east and say, 'I associate myself with Christ.' After taking off his old garments, he would step down into the waters. Baptized and anointed, he would be clothed in white and brought from the baptistery into the church.

Paul's use of the phrase 'in Christ' often implies the meaning 'in the body of Christ';<sup>6</sup> and to be 'baptized into Christ' includes incorporation into the Christian community. The Church is the Israel of God; just as a Gentile who wished to become a proselyte was, among other things, baptized after due instruction and entered into the Jewish inheritance and family, so it was in the case of the Christian Church. Proselyte baptism is far more important as an antecedent than the various pagan rites that have often been pressed into service. David Daube, the Jewish scholar, has shown in his book, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, that even the idea of death was associated in Jewish minds with proselyte baptism. Conversion to Judaism was regarded as 'a passage from death to life' (p.110). The Rabbis refer to proselytes as people who have risen from their graves (p.111). 'The (Pauline) doctrine that baptism,

as it means a rising from the dead in a moral and spiritual sense, also means a dying to the sinful world . . . has its root in Jewish teaching' (pp.137f).

The Israelites thought of their community as a living unit, the same through the generations, and to them the great deeds of God were not remote events of the past. The current Passover service contains the striking words: 'In every generation each one of us should regard himself as though he himself had gone out from Egypt.' These words may not belong to the Haggadah in its earliest form, but they are nevertheless true to the way in which the Jews have always regarded the feast. Do they not help us to understand the meaning of dying and rising with Christ? He Himself is the embodiment of the People of God. The remnant of the old Israel narrows down to the one righteous man, and then in Him widens to gather and include the new Israel. When we are incorporated into the new Israel we appropriate its past history. Just as the individual Jews felt they were personally involved in the redemptive happenings of their past, so the individual Christian knows that he was involved in the death and resurrection of Christ. 'One died for all, therefore all died' (2 Cor 5<sub>14</sub>). 'That which Christ did and suffered on behalf of mankind is the experience of the people of God as concentrated in Him.'

W. L. Knox speaks of Romans 6 as a Christian revision of the *kerygma* of Judaism, in which the death and resurrection of Jesus replace the Exodus from Egypt.

The proselyte, through circumcision and the proselyte's bath, was enabled to come out of Egypt and pass through the Red Sea into the promised land of Israel. This original salvation of the people was re-enacted in every Gentile who was prepared to come out of Egypt. . . Paul transfers the argument to the death and resurrection of Jesus. (*St Paul and the Church of the Gentiles*, p.97).

Daube too links proselyte baptism with the events of Exodus: 'in listening to the commandments during baptism, the proselyte stood at mount Sinai'. The entire procedure 'was conceived of as a reenactment of the exodus and the pilgrimage ensuing on it, with the gift of the Torah as the climax' (p.121).

It is clear from all this that in two ways the association of Christian initiation with death is illuminated by its Jewish background. There is the idea referred to earlier of a proselyte passing from death to life and thereby dying to the world. And there is also the thought of a re-enactment of the redemptive deeds of God, and the replacement of the Exodus with the death and resurrection of Christ as the corresponding deliverance.

But the references to baptism cover only a small part of all that Paul has to say about dying with Christ. This conception is more fundamental in his thought than is often realized. In addition to Romans 6 and Colossians 2 and 3, we have many passages without any direct mention of baptism; Ephesians 2, Galatians 2, 2 Corinthians 5, Philippians 3 are just a few examples, and it will be seen that they are among the most important passages in all Paul's writings. It is quite wrong to imagine that this conception connects only with initiation and its outworking in Christian living. It is in fact linked with Paul's thought on justification. In Galatians 2 he is dealing with the central ideas of salvation through faith in Christ, and it is precisely here that we find the great declaration of 2<sub>20</sub>: 'I am crucified with Christ.' Since we died in Christ, the law has no

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further claim against us; 'he that hath died is justified from sin' (Rom 6<sub>7</sub>), or as C. F. D. Moule suggests, 'death clears one's sentence'. This is not substitution; it is not Christ's merits being transferred to us; it is rather that we are 'found in Him'. In Christ we are members of a justified community and share in its status. Christ lives as the centre of a new sphere of life in which the old world does not count; and in Him we are dead to the law with its condemnation.

There is nothing meritorious about dying with Christ; on the contrary, it implies the collapse of any human merit or claim. It is, as Moule has suggested, a pleading guilty, an acceptance of the death sentence. In the sheer mercy of God we are, as it were, brought past the final judgement into the life of the new age.<sup>8</sup> Paul's conversion involved, to use Bultmann's words, 'the utter reversal of his previous understanding of himself and a self-surrender to the grace of God'.

Paul's ethical appeal springs from this starting-point. He was quite aware that while the old man has been crucified in the reckoning and intention of God, it still at times shows considerable powers of survival. He appeals to them in effect to 'become what they are'. This is not something that depends upon the will and self-determination alone, for the new environment brings with it all the resources of divine grace and a share in Christ's resurrection victory. The Christian has been placed within a new sphere of life with a new set of relationships. It is his task to work out in daily living this new orientation. Reckon yourselves to be dead. It is not good taste to walk around after one's funeral. And so he calls men to mortify their members. One is reminded of Jesus' words about cutting off the hand and the foot. This is perhaps the point at which to mention the remarkable harmony there is between the teaching of Paul and that of our Lord; what Jesus said about denying the self and carrying the cross connects with this Pauline message.

It is also within this context that Paul reaches his convictions about the barriers being destroyed. We have crossed over to a new world where there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free; all these divisions belong to the old universe to which we have died (Eph 2<sub>14ff</sub>; Col 3<sub>3-11</sub>). Paul does not argue from abstract ethical principles; all springs from something which God has done. There is a dynamic force about his thought which many of his interpreters have missed. To him the death and Resurrection of Christ have changed the conditions of human life, created a new situation which brings new possibilities within the reach of men.

The many references to our subject in Paul's letters roughly arrange themselves in three groups, though there is considerable overlapping. We have already touched upon (1) those which relate to the beginning of the Christian life, including (a) baptism, (b) justification and dying to the law (see also Rom 7<sub>4-6</sub>), and (c) the new life as God's gift (Eph 2<sub>5f</sub>); and (2) those which are concerned with the problems of Christian living, such as (a) mortifying the members by working out in practical ways one's death to sin (cf. Gal 5<sub>24</sub>), and (b) questions of the community, such as the destruction through the Cross of the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. But there is a further category (3) which deals with service. There are two aspects of this. (a) The Christian, like his Lord, must suffer and die to give life to others. Here we may place Colossians 1<sub>24</sub>, with its implication that we must share in His redemptive ministry; and the striking words of 2 Corinthians 4<sub>10-12</sub>: 'Always bearing about in the body



the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body. . . . So then death worketh in us, but life in you.' (b) All that Paul says about enduring persecution and travail may be included as a further aspect of what is involved in service, e.g. 2 Corinthians 6<sub>9</sub>, 'as dying and behold we live', and 2 Timothy 2<sub>11f</sub>, 'For if we die with him, we shall also live with him'. 2 Corinthians 1<sub>8-10</sub> may be recalled here, and Philippians 3<sub>10</sub> with its emphasis upon the power of His resurrection and conformity to His death. In the dangers of his apostolic labours, Paul indeed had to 'die daily' (1 Cor 15<sub>31</sub>).

The sayings we have just been considering under (3) remind us of the grain of wheat falling into the ground to die, and in dying becoming fruitful and not remaining alone. This necessity, as the context clearly shows (Jn 12<sub>24-6</sub>), embraced both Jesus Himself and His followers. One is reminded of two missionaries who were beginning work in a particularly dangerous area and were asked if they were not afraid of being killed. They replied, 'We died before we set out.'

It is clear from what we have already seen that this doctrine of dying with Christ occupied a central place in Paul's thinking. Matthew Arnold, who devotes a good deal of space to it in his book *St Paul and Protestantism*, is no doubt exaggerating when he writes:

The three essential terms of Pauline theology are not, therefore, as popular theology makes them: calling, justification, sanctification. They are rather these: dying with Christ, resurrection from the dead, growing into Christ (pp.81-2).

Though this is certainly an over-statement, it may serve to remind us that there is far more on this subject than is usually recognized in Paul's letters. Not that it is confined by any means to the writings of Paul. We find its roots in the Gospels and it is referred to in 1 Peter, especially in 2<sub>24</sub>. Selwyn includes in his commentary on 1 Peter an essay on 'The imitation of Christ and the atonement' in which he gives prominence to the principle of 'the dying life' as set forth in this epistle.

Christian thought has always given some place to these conceptions. Think for instance of the basic framework of Dante's *Commedia*. It is not a coincidence that Dante begins his journey through Hell on Good Friday; it is Easter Eve when he leaves it. He descends the subterranean Inferno and reaches the centre of the earth, Purgatory being at the other side of the globe. At the centre he turns completely round, for he now has to ascend to the antipodes; and this turning represents his conversion from sin.

By a strange and arduous way, typical of the persevering struggle out of vice, Dante with his guide mounts upwards to the clear air; and, on the shores of Purgatory in the southern hemisphere, they 'issued forth to re-behold the stars'. Like the Redeemer of mankind, Dante has been dead and buried part of three days, and it is not yet daybreak on Easter Sunday, 'in the end of the Sabbath when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week'.<sup>9</sup>

This great work has not only a literal meaning; it is also an allegory of man's soul, and of Dante himself, turning in revulsion from sin and rising with Christ to new life, so that after the bitter experience of purification he is made ready for the vision of God.

We may recognize in the death and resurrection of Christ one of the basic

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archetypes of human experience. J. A. Hadfield, from the psychological point of view, emphasizes the importance of new birth, of true development as a series of dyings to the past and rising to new possibilities.<sup>10</sup> In the light of this, how interesting it is to find Goethe's verse: 'Die and come to life—for so long as this is not accomplished, thou art but a troubled guest upon an earth of gloom'; and Tennyson's words

*O for a man to arise in me  
That the man I am may cease to be.*

Is not this the deep cry of the human heart?

All this helps us to see that we have been considering one of the fundamental patterns of the world of men. Here is one of the many ways in which Christianity dovetails into the human situation and takes the shape of our need. For in spite of the parallels there is something unique about the Christian good news. Here is something infinitely more than man vainly trying to rise on stepping-stones of his dead self to higher things. It is the communication of the power of the living Christ. 'No longer I, but Christ liveth in me.' We walk in a real newness of life because the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells within us, bringing us into a fellowship which death cannot sever.

If thou die with Him, thou shalt also live with Him; and if thou art His companion in suffering, thou shalt also be His companion in glory.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One-volume edition, pp.692-700.

<sup>2</sup> Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, xi; cf. A. D. Nock, *Conversion*, pp.138-55. For other examples of ceremonial death, see J. A. Stewart, *Myths of Plato*, pp.365-79. Plutarch drew attention to the similarity of the two words *teleutan*, to die, and *teleisthai*, to be initiated.

<sup>3</sup> *Origin and Significance of the N.T. Baptism*, pp.140f. Cf. A. D. Nock in *Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation* (ed. Rawlinson), p.115.

<sup>4</sup> F. Leenhardt writes on Romans 6: 'We are compelled to refute that interpretation of the Pauline doctrine of baptism which connects it with the contemporary mystery cults.' *Romans*, 157. Cf. the discussion in A. Wikenhauser, *Pauline Mysticism* (E.T., 1960), pp. 163-242.

<sup>5</sup> *The N.T. Doctrine of Baptism*, pp.31f, 72f.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. A. M. Hunter, *Introducing N.T. Theology*, p.96.

<sup>7</sup> C. H. Dodd, *Romans*, p.86. W. D. Davies, in *St. Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, contends that the Christian conception of dying and rising with Christ belongs to the same world of thought as the Passover Liturgy, and 'just as the true Jew is he who has made the history of his nation his own history, so the Christian is he who has made the history of Christ his own' (p.107).

<sup>8</sup> 'The Judgement Theme in the Sacraments' in *Background of the N.T. and Its Eschatology* (ed. Davies and Daube), pp.464ff.

<sup>9</sup> E. Gardner, *Dante*, p.101.

<sup>10</sup> *Psychology and Morals*, pp.110ff.

<sup>11</sup> *Imitation of Christ*, II.12.

## THE FIVE JOHNS

*Roderic Dunkerley*

THERE ARE five men called John mentioned in the New Testament. It is of considerable interest to examine the statement about them separately and carefully.

1. There is first of all John the Baptist. All four Gospels begin by telling of his appearing in the wilderness, preaching and baptizing and then being imprisoned by Herod Antipas. The story is familiar and need not detain us. But the way in which he is introduced in the Fourth Gospel must be noticed. After the prefatory paragraph about the Logos and the Light, we read: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of that Light."

Dr A. C. Headlam called attention to the fact that in the Fourth Gospel he is always called just John without any distinguishing mark, whereas the Synoptics all speak of him as John the baptist. He links this with the other fact that the author (whom he believed to be John, the son of Zebedee) never speaks of himself by name, and interprets these two facts to mean that "To him there was no other John" and that he deliberately kept himself incognito for that reason. Headlam<sup>1</sup> seemed to think that this supported his ascription of the book to the son of Zebedee, but he acknowledged that the point was a subtle one, and I do not know of its receiving notice from any other scholar. It is obvious that it would apply equally to any other John, and so the argument can hardly be deemed a strong one.

But the verse I have quoted may possibly have another significance. Would not any reader to whom it was completely strange and who knew nothing whatever about critical studies regarding the authorship of the book take it for granted that it was called after this John whose witness was so stressed in the first few chapters? The coincidence between the name in 1<sup>6</sup>, 7—with its emphasis upon John as the first and greatest witness to Christ—and the name of the other John traditionally regarded as the author has always struck me as very strange. May it not possibly mean that the name was at first given to the book because of this emphasis, without, of course, any suggestion of authorship, and that presently when questions of authorship began to arise it was ascribed to John the disciple, perhaps without sufficient reason?

2. We come next to that John, the son of Zebedee and the brother of James. The Synoptics all tell of his call on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, where they were all fishermen, apparently in quite a substantial way of business, since they were in partnership with Simon and Andrew (Lk 5<sub>10</sub>) and had hired servants to help them (Mk 1<sub>20</sub>). The quality of his discipleship is suggested by the fact that he was one of the small inner group whom Jesus chose to have

with Him on certain occasions (Mk 5<sub>37</sub>, 9<sub>2</sub>, 14<sub>33</sub>), and that he with Peter was chosen to prepare the last meal in the Upper Room (Lk 22<sub>8</sub>). On the other hand, the outburst of anger of which he and his brother were guilty (Lk 9<sub>54</sub>) and his rebuke of an exorcist who used the name of Jesus (Mk 9<sub>38</sub>), both of which earned the reproof of Jesus, suggest rather a fiery temper. The nickname 'Boanerges'—'Sons of Thunder' (Mk 3<sub>17</sub>)—which Jesus gave the brothers points in the same direction, though Dr Rendel Harris has argued that the term really simply implies that they were twins.

He is not mentioned by name in the Fourth Gospel. At 21, 'the sons of Zebedee' are spoken of as present in a boat on the Sea of Galilee with other disciples. It has, of course, been commonly held that he was the other of 'the two which heard John speak' (Jn 1<sub>40</sub>), and also that he was 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' (Jn 13<sub>23</sub>, 19<sub>26</sub>, 20<sub>2</sub>, 21<sub>7</sub>, 20) and 'another disciple, which was known unto the high priest' (18<sub>15-16</sub>). But it must be definitely stated that this identification is quite uncertain—a point to which we shall refer later. Meanwhile, we may just notice one almost fantastic suggestion that has been made in support of it: that the fish partnership of Galilee had a branch or connexion in Jerusalem, with the high priest as one of its customers. This ignores the fact that fish-dealers would be more likely to know the cook or steward than the head of the house and of the priesthood!

What is definite is that there is a distinct contrast between the picture of the sturdy, trustworthy, but rather headstrong fisherman of the Synoptics and the picturesque figure of the gentle youth 'leaning on Jesus' bosom' (Jn 13<sub>23</sub>). This point is sharpened when we remember the ambition of John and his brother asking for the best seats (Mk 10<sub>37</sub>). Would Jesus, who reproved them, proceed to give John the place of honour at the Last Supper? It is true that there are strange contradictions in men's characters, as schizophrenia has shown us—and, of course, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. But in the case before us, it does seem possible that tradition has become confused, and that two men, not one, are referred to in these various passages. We shall see presently that there is a considerable amount of evidence on quite other grounds that this is so.

In the New Testament outside the Gospels, John is mentioned as being in the Upper Room after the Ascension, and presumably therefore at Pentecost, as going to the Temple with Peter, and being arrested and tried and imprisoned ('the boldness of Peter and John' being particularly noticed), as being sent with Peter on a mission to Samaria, and as being of those in Jerusalem with whom Paul conferred on the occasion of his visit mentioned in Galatians 2<sub>9</sub>.

This exhausts the Biblical evidence about him, but we must just notice that there is a possibility that he was martyred, either at the same time as his brother James (Acts 12<sub>2</sub>), or somewhat later, but still in early days. The evidence for this is not strong; two late writers—an anonymous epitomist (seventh or eighth century) of Philip of Side's *Ecclesiastical History* (c. 430) and *Georgios Hamartolos* (ninth century)—both state that Papias in his Second Book of the *Oracles of the Lord* said that John as well as his brother was killed 'by the Jews'. Some other small pieces of evidence point in the same direction, but the matter is quite uncertain. Moffatt<sup>2</sup> and Goguel<sup>3</sup> accepted this view, and Streeter<sup>4</sup> seemed inclined to do so. Headlam argued forcibly against it. This measure of doubt at least suggests caution in assuming that the Patmos story necessarily

refers to this John, especially as there is another to whom it may equally well apply. It is to this third John that we now turn attention.

3. In Acts 4, we have the exceedingly interesting statement that amongst the Jewish 'rulers' who gathered to try Peter and John were 'Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest'. There is no other reference to this Sadducean John in the New Testament, but I believe that quite a strong case can be made out for the idea that he became a convinced follower of Christ and member of the Church, and that he is indeed that mysterious John the Elder of whom we catch glimpses in early Christian literature, resulting eventually in great confusion between him and the son of Zebedee.

The first hint that perhaps there were two different Johns in the Church in the first century is found in the famous passage where Papias described his method of collecting material for his *Expositions*: 'And again on any occasion when a person came my way who had been a follower of the Elders, I would inquire about the discourses of the Elders—what was said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip, or by Thomas, or James, or by John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, and what Aristion and the Elder John, the disciples of the Lord, say.' This statement was quoted by and commented upon by Eusebius, who considered it meant that Papias had personally met this second John, but had only reports at second hand of the other. He thought it confirmed the statement he had heard that there were two persons in Asia of this name and two tombs there each said to be John's.

There is no other evidence in the same direction. Dionysius of Alexandria (c. 250) argued strongly that the difference in style between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse made it impossible to think they were by the same author, and he added: 'I think there was a certain other [John] among those that were in Asia, since it is said that there were two tombs at Ephesus, and that each of the two was said to be John's.' The Apostolic Constitutions (c. 370), which contains some very early material, states in a list of the Bishops of Ephesus, 'Timothy ordained by Paul, John ordained by John'. And Dr Mingana<sup>5</sup> some years ago discovered a Peshitto codex of the Fourth Gospel, copied from an earlier one dated 750, containing the following superscription: 'The Holy Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, the preaching of John the younger.' Mingana said: 'Harnack's hypothesis concerning the composition of the Fourth Gospel by a disciple of the Apostle has for the first time received documentary support, which we are not at liberty to discount.' He also quoted another document ascribed to Eusebius, which gave short historical accounts of the Twelve, in the course of which is the statement: 'When the Apostle John reached old age, he died and was buried by his disciple John who succeeded him in the see of Ephesus.'

It certainly appears then that there probably was a second prominent John in the Church in the middle of the first century. Dr Headlam was very doubtful about this: 'It seems to me that there is not sufficient evidence for the existence of John the Presbyter, apart from John the Apostle.' He laid great stress on the testimony of Irenaeus, believing that all his references to 'the beloved disciple' applied to the son of Zebedee and that there was no room for any other John. Against this we have Eisler's extremely emphatic statement<sup>6</sup>: 'There is not a



word of truth in the usual assertion that John the Zebedaïd is identified with John the Evangelist by Irenaeus, Theophilus of Antioch, the *Canon Muratori*, or the presbyters of old quoted by Clement of Alexandria.' He says it is simply running round in a vicious circle to make this equation which is never implicitly or explicitly stated in any of these writers. More recently J. N. Sanders<sup>7</sup> has said much the same: 'There is no evidence from Polycarp, or, so far as I am aware, from Irenaeus either, which compels us to suppose that he [the Ephesian John] was the son of Zebedee.'

We come now to the crucial witness of Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, who wrote to Pope Victor (c. 196) in order to exalt his own Church in the face of Roman claims: 'For indeed great luminaries have fallen asleep in Asia . . . ; to wit, Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis, also his two daughters, who grew old in virginity, and his other daughter who lived in the Holy Spirit and rests at Ephesus; and moreover there is John too, who leaned on the Lord's breast, who was a priest wearing the *petalon*, both martyr and teacher—he has fallen asleep at Ephesus.' This is a very remarkable statement. Philip is spoken of as one of the twelve, but John is not—the mention of John comes after that of Philip and even his daughters—and, strangest of all, John is said to have been a priest, wearing the *petalon*, which the dictionary defines as 'the gold plate on the mitre of the Jewish high priest'.

This last point has been a persistent conundrum to scholars. Kirsopp Lake<sup>8</sup> said it had never been discovered what this allusion to the high priest's diadem meant here. Headlam's<sup>9</sup> suggestion that perhaps 'there was a stage in the organization of the Church when the body of the apostles and elders formed a sort of Christian Sanhedrin' is surely wildly incredible—a kind of last, hopeless resort of the baffled! Why should we not understand Polycrates in a perfectly straightforward way, and take it that he meant what he said? We are told that 'a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith' (Acts 6<sub>7</sub>), and the John we are considering (Acts 4<sub>6</sub>) who was of the kindred of the high priest may well have been one of them. Eisler<sup>10</sup> indeed affirms that, according to Josephus, all the five sons of Annas, one of whom was named John, served as high priests, but I have not been able to verify this.

It should not be thought impossible that a member of the high priestly family—and even one who for a time had held that office himself—should become a Christian and presently win a position of prominence and influence. If Saul, the 'coming man' in Pharisaic circles, experienced such a revolution in thought and life, why should not John, a 'leading light' of the Sadducees? We may remember, too, that Joseph Barnabas, a wealthy Levite, underwent such a change, and also Manaen, a foster-brother of Herod the Tetrarch. What wonderful and surprising stories must lie behind these familiar facts—no less remarkable than the possibility we are considering here! And again there is the strange fact that by the middle of the first century Christianity had penetrated at Rome into the Emperor's palace and circle, and that presently Clement of the royal house was put to death for 'foreign superstition', which almost certainly meant 'Christian faith'.

This identification is admittedly hypothetical, but it appears to suit the facts much better than Headlam's. And there is a further point in its favour. It is surely a striking fact that in the Synoptics there is only one man of whom we

read that Jesus 'beholding him loved him' (Mk 10<sub>21</sub>), and that he is described as 'a young man' (Mt. 19<sub>20</sub>) and 'a ruler' (Lk 18<sub>18</sub>). It would appear natural that when in the Fourth Gospel we read of a disciple 'whom Jesus loved' the reference should be to this same man. That at first he refused the searching challenge put to him by Jesus is not conclusive against this; Saul also kicked against the pricks at first before yielding to the love that sought him. Nor is it certain that no one else sat down with Jesus at the Last Supper as well as the Twelve. These objections notwithstanding, Dr H. B. Swete held this view that the 'disciple whom Jesus loved' was the same as the 'loved' young man of the Synoptics, and the idea is so eminently sensible that it is difficult to resist it; mere coincidence would seem a strange explanation of the duplication of this expression. But we are indebted to Eisler for the intriguing suggestion that this young ruler was of the kindred of the high priest and actually appears in the New Testament at Acts 4<sub>6</sub>—still in the toils of family and tradition, although in touch with Jesus, probably secretly. How and when he finally broke away and the 'great refusal' changed into the 'great acceptance' we cannot, of course, know, but that he became eventually the beloved John of Ephesus is, I believe, a reasonable as it is certainly a fascinating possibility.

If this was so, then it follows that almost certainly he was the author of the Fourth Gospel. Street<sup>11</sup> argued strongly that we have 'the author's signature' in the two little epistles 2 and 3 John, in which the Elder *par excellence* addressed his friends. They are so closely allied to the Gospel and 1 John in diction, style, and general outlook, that 'we do really know who wrote the Fourth Gospel'. It may not be quite as definite as this, but it appears to me the most probable hypothesis advanced so far. Streeter did not consider the idea that the Saducean John came into the picture at all, but I suggest that it deserves careful attention and that it may well be the last crucial piece of the jigsaw.

4. Our fourth John is 'John, whose surname was Mark'—the son of that Mary to whose house in Jerusalem Peter went when he was released from prison (Acts 12<sub>12</sub>). It is often thought that this was the house of the Upper Room where the Last Supper took place and where the disciples and others were gathered together after the Ascension and at Pentecost, and that it was a kind of headquarters of the Church in Jerusalem in early days. This John was taken by Barnabas and Paul with them on their return from Jerusalem to Antioch (12<sub>25</sub>), and later, on their mission to Cyprus (13<sub>6</sub>), as their 'minister' or 'attendant' (R.V.), no doubt to assist in travelling arrangements and so forth. Why he left them at Perga in Pamphylia (13<sub>13</sub>) is not known; various obvious suggestions have been made, but the matter is not important. In neither of the last two passages is the surname 'Mark' mentioned, but it is quite clear who is meant. When the two apostles planned a further journey, he was the cause of disagreement between them, Paul apparently feeling that his previous desertion disqualified him from further service, while Barnabas felt differently and took him with him to Cyprus again (15<sub>36-40</sub>).

The reason for Barnabas's attitude is perhaps revealed by the statement in Colossians 4<sub>10</sub> that Mark was his cousin (R.V.); Paul's remark there—'touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him'—may imply a certain hesitation still remaining about him; he is to be welcomed, but carefully watched over and helped. At Philemon 24 Paul writes of him as one

of his 'fellow-labourers', and at 2 Timothy 4<sub>11</sub> we read, 'Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry', which may possibly mean that Mark's interest in collecting stories of Jesus had already started and that Paul valued his help in such matters. In 1 Peter 5<sub>13</sub>, the writer sends salutations from 'Marcus my son', which reminds us of the link between the older and the younger man in Jerusalem years before. It is outside the scope of this article to consider where these various epistles were written or by whom.

Tradition is, of course, very definite that Peter and Mark, were closely associated at Rome in the closing days of Peter's life, and that the Gospel according to Mark was one outcome of that association. Papias is stated by Eusebius to have quoted 'the Elder' to the effect that 'Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without, however, recording in order what was either said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow him, but afterwards as I said [attended] Peter who adapted his instructions to the need [of his hearers], but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord's oracles. So then Mark made no mistake while he thus wrote down some things as he remembered them.' Irenaeus confirmed this statement, making it clear that it was after the decease of Peter and Paul that Mark wrote; Clement of Alexandria, on the other hand, says that Mark wrote during the lifetime of Peter. The point is not of great importance, except when we are attempting to date the writing of the Gospel, which does not concern us at the moment.

It has often been thought that Mark left a sort of signature in his book—the strange little incident of the young man in the Garden of Gethsemane: 'And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him, and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked' (14<sub>51, 52</sub>). It might be said that this contradicts Papias's words just quoted—'nor did he follow him'—but the latter statement obviously referred to the following of discipleship, not just to a momentary following of this kind. If the house of the Last Supper was indeed that of Mary, the mother of Mark, what could be more likely than that the boy of the house, knowing of the visitors and their supper, and sensing that something was afoot, should hurry out after them as they left, snatching up his sleeping cloth instead of dressing fully?

One last point. In his recent study to which I have already referred, J. N. Sanders<sup>12</sup> has made a very odd suggestion which I do not think can be seriously entertained. He thinks that John the Elder may have been the John whose mother was the Mary, whose house was used by the apostles in Jerusalem—in other words, the John whose surname was Mark. 'He could not, of course, have also written the Second Gospel, a role for which he is often cast', he remarks. 'But it is not surely a very great strain on our credulity to suppose that there were two men with the surname Mark associated at different periods of his career with Peter', and he says we should not boggle at this idea in view of certain modern instances of names being duplicated. But the question is much more complicated than that. It would mean that all the references to Mark in Acts relate to the Elder John, who—according to Papias—attributed the Second Gospel to another Mark who suddenly makes his appearance on the scene and is otherwise quite unknown. The more one thinks about it the

more unlikely it seems. And in any case the identification of the Elder with the Sadducean John, which I have argued here, gives a far more probable and coherent interpretation of the evidence.

5. We come lastly to John of the Apocalypse, who is mentioned four times in that book (1, 4, 9, 21<sub>2</sub>). Tradition, of course, generally identified him with the son of Zebedee, though, as we have seen, Dionysius of Alexandria in the middle of the third century argued that the differences between the Gospel of John and the Apocalypse were too great for both to have been written by the same author. His suggestion that the latter was by a second John living at Ephesus (the Elder John of Papias), leaving the Gospel and the Epistles to the Apostle John, has often been reversed by modern opinion—the less grammatical Apocalypse being thought of as more probably the work of the Galilean fisherman. But another view seems on the whole to be more likely—that the Apocalypse is really a pseudonymous book. 'It is a fact that every other known apocalypse was not written by the person to whom it was assigned.' It was a regular feature of this apocalyptic literature, of which the Book of Daniel is the earliest example, that books should be published under the name of some well-known character purporting to give revelations granted to him about future events. There is actually an Apocalypse of Peter, dating from early in the second century, which no one for a moment considers authentic. There are others of later date ascribed to Paul, Stephen, and Thomas.

In other words, the writer of the Apocalypse probably assumed the name of John in honour of one of the Johns of Ephesus—if two did actually live there. If the son of Zebedee died at an earlier date, then it must have been the Elder who was thus commemorated. There is probably substance in the tradition that a John was exiled to Patmos, and it may well be that he wrote the seven letters to the Churches of Asia while there. After his death the unknown writer who took his name may have gathered these and other relics of his teaching, perhaps combining them with an earlier Jewish apocalypse to fashion the book as we now have it. It has often been thought to be a composite work of this sort. Beyond this I do not think we need go. Such a method of composition does not detract at all from the beauty, value, and inspiration of it, any more than it does from various books of the Old Testament. The words of Thomas à Kempis are very sound: 'Let not the authority of the writer offend thee, whether he was of little or of great learning; but let the love of pure truth lead thee to read. Inquire not who said this; but attend to what is said.'

<sup>1</sup> A. C. Headlam, *The Fourth Gospel as History* (1948), p.42.

<sup>2</sup> J. Moffatt, *Introduction to the New Testament*, p.602f.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Goguel, *The Life of Jesus*, Eng. Trans., p.151.

<sup>4</sup> B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, p.435.

<sup>5</sup> A. Mingana in *John Rylands Library Bulletin*, 1930, p.333.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Eisler, *The Enigma of the Fourth Gospel* (1938), p.25.

<sup>7</sup> J. N. Sanders in *Studies in the Fourth Gospel*, ed. F. L. Cross (1957), p. 77.

<sup>8</sup> Kirsopp Lake in his edition of Eusebius's *Eccl. Hist.* (1936), p.271, note.

<sup>9</sup> *Op cit.*, p.65.

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, p.42.

<sup>11</sup> *Op cit.*, p.460.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, p.73.

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## Recent Literature

EDITED BY JOHN T. WILKINSON

*A History of Israel*, by John Bright. (Student Christian Movement Press, 40s.)

Professor John Bright has given us a history of Israel which is attractively arranged, and eminently readable throughout. It is a work which makes admirable use of the great amount of information regarding the ancient Near East which has come to light in recent years from archaeological sources, enabling the reader to appreciate Israel's indebtedness to her environment, and also her uniqueness. It is, indeed, a book which is far more than a history in the ordinary sense; it is no mere record of events, but a most interesting treatment of some of the important aspects of that outstanding fact of history, Israel's religion. In short, it may be said that here is one more clear indication that in Israel's case history and religion are not two, but one and indivisible. Most readers will be grateful that Professor Bright devotes considerable space at the beginning of his book to what was happening in the Near East long before the rise of Israel. Some may be inclined to regard this section as too long, but the fact is that the material dealt with is of vital importance for a true understanding of Israel's story, and that it has often to be sought in other volumes which are not necessarily concerned to make helpful comparisons with Israel. Here it is easily accessible, a most valuable introduction to the main subject of the work. It is to the credit of the author that he resists the temptation to make startling pronouncements on the basis of recent discoveries. It is so easy to exaggerate. But this book, whilst showing everywhere the marks of deep learning, is characterized by a soberness of judgement which is greatly to be commended. For example, regarding the Patriarchal period, Professor Bright makes it very clear that the evidence now available gives us every right to affirm that the traditions are concerned with historical events and personages. But he is careful to point out that the religious use of the traditions in later centuries has created problems about both the history and the religion of the Patriarchs which we cannot at present hope to solve. In the section on the Exodus the author sets forth his belief that the distinctive quality of Israel's faith is to be traced back to Moses. It is also good to see stated here, far more clearly than in many another book on the subject, that only a comparatively small part of the later Israel had the experience of oppression and deliverance in Egypt. There are, of course, some matters on which one differs with Professor Bright. It is not quite easy to see why he should prefer to accept the southern location of Mt Sinai, or why he should quarrel with the term 'monolatry' as a description of Mosaic religion (for it does after all mean something which certain parts of the indubitably early literature appear to support). The remaining divisions of the book are on the Monarchy, the exile, and the Formative Period of Judaism, and regarding all this the author continues to write with attractiveness and liveliness. This history is really alive, a fact for which students and others who use it will no doubt be truly thankful. Conflicting points of view are given fair treatment, and when a question has to be left open Professor Bright says so, in so many words; he also makes it plain when uncertainty about a historical matter is unimportant so far as religion is concerned. It may be mentioned that he takes the view that Ezra came to Jerusalem in 428 B.C. and argues very well for that date. If some of us prefer to continue to give



our vote for 397, however, the tone of the whole book leads us to believe that we may do so without being denounced. This work is a notable achievement and deserves to be widely read and deeply studied.

J. Y. MUCKLE

*Greek Influence in Jewish Eschatology*, by T. F. Glasson. (S.P.C.K. Biblical Monographs, 9s. 6d.)

This is the first of a new series of monographs on biblical and related subjects. The author is dissatisfied with the view that the dominant influence on late Jewish thought and literature was Persian in origin, and seeks to show that there are many examples of Greek ideas having permeated into Palestinian Judaism. The Jewish book most in evidence is 1 Enoch, so that the title really refers to apocalyptic eschatology rather than eschatology in general, and the simple method employed is to point to Greek influence by uncovering similar or parallel concepts in such notable spirits of Hellas as Homer, Hesiod, and Plato. A certain confusion has crept into the material of this book in that the author appears to oscillate between the thought of direct dependence upon Greek writers and that of stimulation by them. On p.8 we read that 'Enoch 1-36 is a Jewish Nekyia', while later on p.59 we are told that contact with Greek mythology revived the interest of the Jews in their own Scriptures. The question of literary dependence is always difficult to determine, but it seems clear that for some of the ideas of Enoch a much more credible and proximate source is the canonical book of Daniel. The term 'Watcher' is found in both works, as indeed are such ideas as those of archangels and the Resurrection. There is a greater development to be found in Enoch, but this is what one would expect in a later and derivative work. The major criticism which can be levelled against this book is that in its method it over-simplifies a notoriously complex subject. Although the apocalypses were written at a time of Greek cultural domination in the Old World, yet it is abundantly clear from the *Hasidim* and Maccabean parties that within Judaism there were elements chronically opposed to Hellenism who regarded it as a *fons et origo mali*. We must therefore not hastily assume Greek influence where similar ideas occur, for as the author himself asserts (on p.82), 'similarity does not always prove derivation'. ISLWYN BLYTHIN

*The Struggle for Penal Reform*, by Gordon Rose. (Stevens & Sons, 50s.)

This book traces in very great detail the history of penal affairs over nearly a century from the founding of the Howard Association in 1866. A unique feature of the study is that attention is concentrated on the part played by the Howard Association, the Penal Reform League (1907), and the product of their amalgamation, the Howard League for Penal Reform (1921). One of the most interesting chapters is the one at the end in which Dr Rose examines the function of such pressure groups in affecting the formulation of policy within a democracy. Like advertisers, pressure groups inform and persuade. They seek to mould public opinion, but they also reflect it. The Howard League, like many other similar groups, relies for support upon its voluntary membership. But the membership is not itself concerned with the detailed formulation of policy. This is left to the small executive group, consisting of experts, who undertake to 'press upon the authorities an attitude of mind with which the membership is in general agreement'. The League and its predecessors have held with remarkable consistency that those responsible for penal policy and administration should be concerned primarily with reformation rather than merely with punishment. The supporters of the League have been foremost in contending that tough measures, such as capital and corporal punishment, are neither humane nor effective in dealing with offenders. The progress of these enlightened ideas of penal treatment has been painfully slow. The road has been full of stumbling-blocks in the shape of uninformed and emotional public reaction, fearful officials, prejudiced law administrators and reluctant govern-

ments. Nevertheless, the story of what has been accomplished in a little under a century is in many ways impressive. The disappearance of deportation as a means of ridding this country of its less satisfactory citizens meant that serious attention had to be given to a wide range of penal problems. Dr Rose deals with a mass of material relating to prisons, police, probation, magistrates courts, and the various trends in thought and practice reflected in parliamentary debates, public correspondence, and the papers of the reform associations. It is a well-documented study, and all serious students of penology will want to keep this volume as a reference-book. Naturally, it lacks the spice of humour that has enlivened many a slighter book on the problem of recalcitrant humanity. Indeed, the only faintly humorous reference is in a quotation from the 1924 edition of the *Howard Journal*. This indicates that in 1923 the Prison Commissioners refused to allow oranges to be sent into the prisons to supplement the Christmas fare on the ground that they were not 'educational', though they had given permission for this to be done the previous year. The *Journal* made the piquant comment: 'Presumably the 1922 orange possessed some enlightening quality that enabled it to squeeze through the strait prison gate'. One of the most valuable features of the heavy spade-work done in the past by the League and its associates is that it has come to be recognized by responsible authorities as an informed and dependable organization. As in other studies, one is impressed by the large part played in all this by men and women of the Quaker persuasion. The book also has some illuminating comments on the advances brought about as a result of incarcerating conscientious objectors, who were often men of high intelligence and reforming zeal. There are several appendices, including one on statistics and one on literature.

KENNETH G. GREET

*God, Christ and Pagan*, by M. I. Boas. (Allen & Unwin, 25s.)

In this book Dr Boas discusses the conflict between what he believes to be 'pure religion' and 'paganism'. He finds paganism permeating all religions, and by paganism he means 'a primitive way of attaining goals through preordained mechanisms: the hope to realize fundamental needs through the accomplishment of certain well-defined and immutable acts' (p.8). The author argues that man from earliest times has believed in divine or supernatural power, but has sought to appropriate that power to satisfy his basic needs by trying to coerce his gods through rituals, magical acts or mechanically repeated formulae. Though again and again great minds have emerged who have substituted ideas for mechanisms, and called man 'to be what he thinks he must be', the old paganism has soon reasserted itself in the mechanical performance of cultic rituals and in blind obedience to divinely sanctioned legalistic codes. Throughout history the religion of the masses has been predominantly pagan. In Jesus and in 'Primitive Christianity' Dr Boas finds 'pure religion' in man's loving response to God and in the repudiation of everything even remotely connected with mechanism in religious thinking. But even by the time that the Gospels were being committed to writing the process of adapting Christianity to paganistic thinking was under way. Thus Christianity, expressing itself increasingly in rituals, dogmas and divinely ordained moral codes, repudiated the spiritual insights of its founder. The book, divided into four chapters, first illustrates the methods which man has employed and still employs to ensure for himself divine co-operation; how magical and mechanistic concepts pervade the cultic expression of religion in such practices as the Eucharist, baptism, chrism, blessing, prayer, and fasting. Dr Boas then traces the struggle between cult and religion, first in Mosaism and the Hebrew religion and then in Christianity. In his final chapter the author discusses numerous parables of Jesus in an attempt to show how the original meaning of Jesus was perverted by interpreters who, dominated by mechanistic, magical and legalistic ideas, sought to reshape Jesus' teaching into a dogmatic system. Throughout the book Dr Boas sets cult and religion

in opposition. Is this really justifiable? However 'pagan' the origins of man's religion, his deepest religious instincts must find expression in cultic practices. Though such practices can easily degenerate into mere mechanical performance and magic, they can also become the true vehicle by which the spiritual life of man is immeasurably deepened. In other words, if, as Dr Boas says, 'the aim of the religious man is to be what he thinks he must be' (p.8) he can find in the rituals and disciplines, the moral code and the traditional doctrines of the Christian Church the 'earthen vessels' through which the 'treasure' of divine and enabling grace is mediated to his soul.

D. HOWARD SMITH

*Worship in the World's Religions*, by Geoffrey Parrinder. (Faber & Faber, 21s.)

The Christian religion is distinctive among the great religions of the world in the emphasis which it places upon the participation of the laity, both men and women, in regular communal acts of worship performed within a sacred building or church. Nevertheless, in all religions, even the most primitive, men seek to find significant expression of fundamental beliefs through acts of worship. Hence the rich variety of religious expression in the great living religions of the world today—in festivals, pilgrimages, ritual acts performed and prayers recited in the temple or in the home. This book by Dr Parrinder (who is Reader in Comparative Religion in the University of London) fills the need for an introduction to worship as it is practised today in the religions of mankind. Dr Parrinder makes no attempt to add still one more to the many excellent introductions to the origin and history of the great religions, which place their main emphasis on historical development, or on leading religious and philosophical ideas; nor does he deal with the rich ritual and liturgical patterns of ancient non-living faiths, such as those of Egypt or Mesopotamia. He concentrates on worship in living religions as it is witnessed and shared by the laity, and only refers to historical events in so far as they are germane to his theme. Dr Parrinder covers a wide field, and conveniently divides his book into four parts. Part One deals with the worship of the millions of people in our modern world who have no written religious records and no scriptures. Dr Parrinder draws on his intimate knowledge of the tribal peoples of Africa, and shows how, though belief in a supreme God is widespread, worship is rarely directed to God, but to innumerable spirits and deceased ancestors. Part Two describes worship in the Indian religions: Hinduism, the Jains, Sikhs, Parsis, and Theravada Buddhism, which latter, though native to India, finds its present strength in Ceylon, Burma, and Thailand. In Part Three Dr Parrinder moves on to the religions of the Far East: Mahayana Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Shinto. Finally, in Part Four, he describes the worship of the laity in Islam, Judaism and Christianity. The book is mainly descriptive of what an intelligent and sympathetic student of religions might learn from personal observation. It gathers into small compass a large amount of interesting and valuable information. In fact, the extent and variety of the ground covered makes it impossible for the author to do more than touch on some of the more important aspects of worship, and there is little attempt to probe beneath the externals to the inner significance of important rites and ceremonies. Dr Parrinder does well to remind us that 'the need today is for a fair and sympathetic understanding of the facts of other religious beliefs and ways of worship', but the rites and symbols of worship, however interesting, cannot in themselves take us far in a comparative study of religion. The attempt has to be made to understand the inner significance of rites to those who participate in them—a difficult, some might even say an impossible, task. The index, together with the short bibliographies appended to each chapter, add much to the usefulness of the book.

D. HOWARD SMITH

*Humanism*, by Moses Hadas. (Allen & Unwin. 15s.)

'Humanism' is the latest volume in the World's Perspective Series, whose general

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object is 'to encourage a renaissance of hope in society and of pride in man's decision as to what his destiny will be'. Its authors include Maritaon, Fred Hoyle, D'Arcy, and Swami Nikhilananda. Humanism is a sadly ambiguous term; the only thing we can be sure about it is that the reader of any book on the subject will find a different view from his own. But the author of this book has no doubt as to his meaning. It is the old Hellenic phrase, 'ever to struggle to reach the highest and to rise above the rest'. It dominated the Greek world of 'heroization'. It expresses humanity's debt to the Greeks. Not that the Greeks were bereft of religion, says the author, in any of the three forms of it which they knew, Cathonic, Olympian, or the vision of the 'mysteries'. They were devoted to it, as the Melian dialogue or the condemnation of Socrates made clear. But they interpreted it by the antithesis of law, *nomos*, made by man and therefore subject to change, and nature, *physis*, the sphere of the Gods and therefore unalterable. Three-quarters of the book is an exposition of this thesis, beginning with Homer, whose Achilles was no 'sulker' in his tent, but a passionate agonist for glory, even if only to be won at the cost of his early death; and going right on to Plutarch, whose heroes were all bred in the same school. Hesiod and Pindar, Aeschylus and Euripides, Stoics and Epicurians were at one. In comparison, our author shows but little interest in the Jews. The Jay Professor of Greek at Columbia University apart from the ingenious suggestion of an 'R' in classical evolution, the author in spite of his name, finds his ideal in both the First and Second Book of Maccabees, and, perhaps with a little hesitation, in both Ecclesiastes and Ecclesiasticus. What, the reader may well ask, of the 2,000 years of Christianity? It is difficult to commend the author, after his seven chapters on the Greeks, for being satisfied with three rather meagre sections on 'channel to Europe', 'Humanist Revival', and 'Return; Machiavelli and Spinoza'. No doubt the author found in Machiavelli what every tyrant in Europe was coming to think as to his position, and could assert that Spinoza (he hardly says so much) transformed Christian piety into the intellectual love of God'. But no attempt has been made to do the slightest justice to the oceanic tides of Christian thought and hope, whether we contemplate Augustine or Shakespeare, Aquinas or Goethe. Yet it might be argued that in an age or a succession of ages whose weapons were as unknown to the Greeks as their visions were meaningless, some similarity of aim was still possible. Did not the Christian strive after excellence? Had he not to leave behind the ruck of the crowd in order to attain eternal life? No one can deny that in every age human beings make after that which, for better or worse reasons, they consider their interest, or, to use the Aristotelian word, their final happiness, their 'entelechy'. But to tremble towards this agreement is to note the vast difference. The average European who has left off reading the Bible may be no better than the Attic Greek who learnt his Homer by heart. But the prize of *time*, honour plus admiration, sets us in a different world from devotion to one 'who loved me and gave Himself for me'. One might well compare a man's passion for his mistress with his love for his true and wedded wife. And to compare the two is to say farewell to history, and psychology, and we might add, all class of thinking.

W. F. LOFTHOUSE

*Bay Windows into Eternity*, by A. Graham Ikin. (Allen & Unwin, 15s.)

This is a book for middle-class mystics. I suspected this when I began (as every conscientious reviewer should) at the beginning. I found myself entered for an obstacle race, facing Dedication, Acknowledgments, Contents, Foreword (by J. B. Phillips withal), Introduction, Preface, and Prologue, before landing at Chapter I on p.29. For a book of only 135 pages, this array of hurdles seemed disproportionate. But I found it symptomatic of the book. I was for ever travelling hopefully without arriving. The pages are cluttered with the familiar paraphernalia of mystical writers. The author belongs to the progeny of Dionysius the Areopagite, without the depth and discernment

of a St Bernard, an Eckhart, or the *Theologia Germanica*. The form is there, but not the substance. I also used the expression 'middle-class'. The tone is set in the Preface, when Miss Ikin favours 'hotel' among the possible renderings of the *μοναὶ* of John 14. But she likes best the idea of rooms in God's house. And what a house! It includes 'kitchens and bathrooms' (plural) 'as well as bedrooms, living-rooms, studies and perhaps a studio, a music-room, and a play-room for the children. The local authority does not provide such homes. The blurb on the jacket of this book says that it 'is written as simply as possible'. I think not. The thoughts are simple enough, but the writing is discursive, involved, and undisciplined. This is a pity, because I believe Miss Ikin to be a good and brave woman who lives radiantly. I think people would derive greater benefit from meeting her than from reading her book. Her religious experience is something she could doubtless impart in person, but she has not done so in print. As I read, style, grammar, and syntax kept obtruding because they were so bad. I had to keep on stopping to sort things out. There are lost clauses hunting about for verbs to tag on to; pronouns without their antecedent; the word 'just' is gratuitously inserted; there are frequent tautologies; italics and quotation marks are lavishly used, often without any apparent significance; phrases like 'as it were', 'so to speak', and 'in that sense' abound. The author's thought is one with her style. She loves symbolism and allegory. The title of her book indicates this, as do some of the chapter headings, e.g. 'The Flying Dragon', 'Nails and Feathers', 'Sticks, Carrots, and Grace', 'The Great Circle', 'The Hour Glass'. Preachers who like to put titles to their sermons will be tempted to plagiarize. If they fall, they should avoid the author's tendency to squeeze every drop of meaning out of her illustrations till they are dry. Miss Ikin wrote her book to try to help her readers to deepen their spiritual life and tap sources of power to cope with their human predicaments. She has not succeeded. She speaks about 'the Divine spark' in the soul of every man, his lower and higher self, and an ascent from one to the other; but her insistence that heaven and earth are one is not convincing. Despite her valiant attempts to join them and her brave talk about keeping our feet firmly on the ground, we are mostly floating among the clouds with dragons and feathered wings, uncreated symbols and odd phrases 'which just flashed into mind, which may or may not be relevant' (p.132). Dean Inge might have liked some of it; but it would be anathema to Reinhold Niebuhr. Hindus and Buddhists may often feel at home in these pages, but Christians, nurtured on the plain bread of the Gospel of the Incarnation, whose faith is in the Word made flesh in all His stupendous realism, will be out of their element. One of the author's own illustrations characterizes the book for me (p.62). She pictures people tunnelling through a mountain from many sides. I can only imagine that such people will meet somewhere in the pitch black darkness of the interior. Truly, to quote Miss Ikin, 'we are all groping'. I believe that the pages of the *Science of Thought Review* (the monthly periodical to which Miss Ikin owes a great deal) bring help to many of its readers. I salute that work from afar. But I dwell on another plane. The hazards of life, 'which', says Miss Ikin, writing from *Shangri-la*, 'are also real on their own plane' (p.119), are my regular companions. I confess that when they have wearied me, I shall turn for strengthening, not to the weird symbolism and impossible syntax of *Bay Windows into Eternity*, but to the plain relief and stimulating periods in a rare chapter of George Macleod's entitled 'The Prayer Life of a Christian Minister in a Committed Church'. I discover afresh, to my great and endless comfort, that 'there is a Man in heaven'.

BRIAN A. GREET

*Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy*, by William Barrett. (Heinemann, 21s.)

Dr Barrett, who is Associate Professor of Philosophy at New York University, traces



the antecedents of existentialism and then presents summaries of the teaching of four existentialist thinkers, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre. The book is a good introduction to existentialism and makes no claim to be a full treatment of the subject, which, however, does not nowadays require more attention than it is given here. The author writes vividly enough to raise all the questions which must be asked if existentialism is to be treated as philosophy and not (which is preferable) as a deeply religious point of view. There is no doubt of his enthusiasm: '... existential philosophy is the authentic intellectual expression of our time'; 'Existentialism is the philosophy of the atomic age'; 'Kierkegaard and Nietzsche fell like block-busters on the quiet world of academic philosophy'; but here and there a welcome sobriety appears, as when Dr Barrett writes of Sartre: 'The man really writes too much. Perhaps if literature becomes a mode of action one gets so caught up in it that one cannot stop the action.' The book opens with extended comment on the present age, on contemporary religion and art, on man's 'treble alienation' from God, from nature, from the impersonal mass-society that surrounds him. This description of our time is now familiar, as is the reader's unease in the presence of so much generalization. Certainly Dr Barrett exaggerates the newness of modern art, as indeed he exaggerates the newness of the characteristic insights of existentialism. Anxiety did not have to wait for Kierkegaard to receive its first expression: it is manifest, with great power, in the Old Testament and in many other places. There follows an examination of the Hebraic, Hellenic, and Christian components of the Western tradition as the author traces the roots of existentialism. He shows how a certain mental atmosphere which can be called existentialist is disclosed with particular vividness in the writings of Pascal, Swift, the Romantics, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy. There cannot be any quarrel with this. Indeed, it can be argued that one need go no further than Pascal and Baudelaire for all that is important in this particular world of thought. But all this Dr Barrett uses principally to introduce his studies of the four existentialist philosophers mentioned above. These four chapters form the body of the work. And it is here that the problems really emerge. The more heavily the existentialist insights are treated the less important they seem to be, and the more necessary it is to ask what exactly is being said. The author concludes with a chapter titled 'The Place of the Furies', in which he shrewdly questions the contemporary world's attempt to avoid facing the realities of death, anxiety, guilt, fear and despair. It is magnificent, in parts; but it is not philosophy. It is really preaching. The official existentialists raise the voice, exaggerate, are brave and self-pitying by turns. And they impress. But one suspects that they are engaged in a kind of campaign. There is no doubt that it is an important campaign; but the movement's best preachers are not Heidegger and Sartre but Pascal, Dostoevsky and Baudelaire.

J. NEVILLE WARD

*The Mystical Life: an Outline of Its Nature and Teachings from the Evidence of Direct Experience*, by J. H. M. Whiteman. (Faber & Faber, 30s.)

This book contains an elaborately tabulated account of so-called 'mystical' experiences ranging over a period of some forty years. From 1931 Dr Whiteman kept careful records of over 2,000 experiences, described variously as 'openings', 'full separations', 'fantasy separations', and 'mystical form liberations'. He traces a spiritual progress over the years, but often it is difficult to distinguish between the experience and its interpretation. The high point of mystical experience, called by Dr Whiteman *deificatio*, was reached by him once for a period of about fifteen seconds. He says: 'I was merged successively in the Idea of the One, the Idea of the Very Self, and the utterly all-sufficing Idea of the Good, nothing whatever existing then except those unchanging and timeless ideas in God.' Many of the experiences are of this type that can readily be paralleled in the classic mystics, but some of the experiences are trivial

at any rate to the reader outside the situation. In some of his 'separations' he is conscious of being of the opposite sex and often of adolescent years. The inclusion of these experiences is explained by his definition of mysticism, which is 'the study of everything non-physical, including the other worlds and their archetypal governance, as well as our spiritual bodies, the facts and their relationship being known by the self-evidence of direct observation and not by reasoning or speculation'. Parallels are quoted from St Theresa, Suso, Plotinus, and Plato, as well as from records of mediums of the last eighty years. There is a wealth of material here for the student of paranormal psychology. Dr Whiteman is sure that his experiences are disclosures of entities which objectively exist. People who have not had such experiences quite understandably doubt their objectivity, and Professor H. H. Price, who writes the Introduction, commends the record, but leaves a question mark against the interpretation. Nevertheless, Dr Whiteman has provided a valuable and fascinating account of what one man has seen through a glass darkly, and has assembled abundant material to support Jung's theory of archetypal imagery.

BERNARD E. JONES

*The Significance of the Synoptic Miracles*, by James Kallas. (S.P.C.K. Biblical Monographs, 12s. 6d.)

The miracles of Jesus are seen as an essential part of the Gospel record. By them is proclaimed the victory over the demonic forces which have usurped the rule of this world and through them is glimpsed the Kingdom of God. The book displays a fine contempt for all 'spiritual' interpretations of the miracles and vigorously condemns Bultmann for his demythologizing and Dodd for his realized eschatology! In several places a more sober estimation of the work of these scholars would be welcome; thus it seems unfair to Dodd to suggest (p.102) that he has trouble with the Resurrection. It will be a surprise to many to learn that, 'The simple fact is that when we fail to take seriously the demonological motif of the Gospel not only do the miracles become obscure but the resurrection becomes insignificant'. On p.65 we are told that in Luke 4<sup>30</sup> Jesus uses the word 'rebuke' of a simple fever which he has used on a demon, and 'The only possible conclusion is that Jesus considered this so-called simple malady of human existence a demonic force which has to be recognized as such and driven out'. But when one recognizes that the word 'rebuke' is absent from the parallel passages in Mark and Matthew other conclusions are possible. It is also hazardous to contrast the attitude of the doctors of the day with that of Jesus by appealing (p.63) to a story which stands only in Luke, who has sometimes been regarded as a physician.

VINCENT PARKIN

*The Ruined Tower*, by Raymond Chapman. (Geoffrey Bles, 13s. 6d.)

This is a good book on the problem of communicating Christian truth. It has especially in mind the Christian writer and the tensions in which he is involved because of his belief and his endeavour after artistic integrity. All writers of serious intent find it difficult adequately to express themselves in words; it is true of them, as of other artists, that 'There are times when the means of communication fall far short of the vision that is to be expressed'. But the Christian writer has troubles of his own, including that caused by the reluctance to replace the somewhat archaic language of the Authorized Version and the Book of Common Prayer by something more colloquial. 'By long association, special language comes to be evocative of devotional feeling.' The devotee may use and cherish a language which places barriers in front of the uninitiated. The reception which has been given to the New English New Testament illustrates the chagrin felt by many when familiar words are supplanted. As Mr Chapman writes (before the publication of the new version): 'Religious mysteries uttered in colloquial speech will strike many devout people as blasphemous.' Then he adds: 'Yet the use of a distinctive religious language will further alienate the sympathy of the unbeliever,

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who will suppose that he is being offered "the same old stuff". Another difficulty is the use of 'symbolic' words and the kind of image they call up. What, for example, does a person in a teeming city make of the word 'shepherd'? Such words may evoke a devotional response, even after they have become remote from everyday life. Next, there is the conflict which may arise between what are described as the writer's moral and aesthetic consciences; and this is wisely discussed. Some Christian writers make a direct attempt to present and commend the faith, but others do not; these latter should, contends Mr Chapman, be influenced by their faith in all that they write. The Christian cannot indulge in 'aesthetic antinomianism'. In some very interesting pages Mr Chapman explores the writings of T. S. Eliot, Christopher Fry, and Charles Williams, and evaluates their efforts to communicate the Christian Faith in the thought-world of today. Though this book has a predominating literary flavour, it has many clear insights into the contemporary situation. Preachers, as well as writers, will find it pertinent and rewarding, for they, too, have the responsible and exacting task of communicating Christian truth through the medium of words. What Mr Chapman says of the Christian writer applies also to the Christian preacher: 'He is a sentry who cannot desert his post, even though he throws down his rifle and runs away to the farthest corner of the earth; for that which he is appointed to guard, he carries within him.'

J. LESLIE WEBB

*The Epistle to the Hebrews: an Introduction and Commentary*, by Thomas Hewitt. (Tyndale Press, 9s. 6d.)

This is a careful and stimulating piece of work. An introduction of some thirty pages considers the problems of authorship, whether the readers were Jews or Gentiles, destination, date, occasion, and purpose. The evidence is stated and so carefully examined that at no point is the reader allowed to feel that the case has been prejudged in the interests of any particular school of thought. The statement that, as the Church of Rome in the second century was wrong about the canonicity of the Epistle, it may have been equally wrong about its apostolicity, is certainly a little odd, but it does not affect the conclusion that the cumulative evidence is convincingly against direct Pauline authorship. There follows a verse-by-verse commentary in which no critical question is shirked. Greek words are transliterated and discussed. Additional notes on passages of outstanding difficulty and or, importance are a particularly valuable feature. The note on 5, is, like the others, primarily exegetical but there is a wealth of ideas for preachers. The book can be used by those who have no knowledge of any version but that of King James, but it can also be used with profit by any student.

VINCENT PARKIN

*The Religion of Israel*, by Yehezkel Kaufmann, translated and abridged by Moshe Greenberg. (George Allen & Unwin, 42s.)

The publication of this translated abridgement of the first seven volumes of *The History of the Religion of Israel*, originally written in Hebrew between 1937 and 1948 by the Professor of the Bible at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is an event of considerable importance. While certain of the author's views—notably his emphatic rejection of Wellhausen's theory of the development of the Pentateuch—are already widely known through his interpreters and his own shorter works, all but a minority of Western scholars have until now been denied the opportunity of studying his detailed treatment of the whole vista of Old Testament history, religion and literary criticism. The present volume deals only with the pre-Exilic period, 'within which Professor Kaufmann places the bulk of ancient Hebrew literature and religious creativity'. These last words summarize the underlying thesis of the whole work. If at some points the author appears to argue against critical positions no longer widely

held, it must be remembered that a substantial part of the original was published some twenty years ago. There is, however, much to be learned from every part of this remarkable work, and one is impressed by the forceful, cogent style, and the great erudition of the writer. The translator, Dr Moshe Greenberg, has achieved his herculean task with distinction, preserving, as far as possible, the author's original language, 'preferring omission and combination to paraphrase'. It is to be regretted that 'documentation and references to the scholarly literature have been almost entirely excluded by limitations of space', since specific references to at least the more important works, many of which are so strongly criticized, would have greatly increased the value and interest of the book. The first part of the book deals with 'The Character of Israelite Religion', and seeks to demonstrate its contrast with paganism. The basic idea of pagan mythology is the subjection of both man and gods to the meta-divine powers of a pre-existent realm, from which the cultic drama seeks to achieve liberation. Diametrically opposed to this concept is the Hebrew idea of God as absolutely sovereign. YHWH's contests are not against mythological powers, but rebellious creatures. So, for example, the idea of a cultic festival which helps or enables the deity to fulfil his function is utterly foreign to Hebrew thought. The hypothetical Hebrew New Year Festival is described as 'one of the most remarkable products of the creative imagination of modern biblical scholarship'. The pre-exilic struggle with idolatry was not a conflict of rival mythologies, but was concerned with the rejection of vestigial practices prejudicial to the cultic exclusiveness necessary for the apt expression of Hebrew monotheism. Israel's religious evolution did not pass from monolatry to monotheism, but from monotheism to monolatry. The second and main part is entitled 'The History of Israelite Religion prior to Classical Prophecy'. Regarding the literary sources, the conclusions of Wellhausen theory are strongly challenged. The antiquity of the Torah in general, and of the Priestly Code in particular, is asserted. The main lines of the Torah literature, as distinct from the Torah Book, which makes its appearance at the time of Josiah, were fully formed by the time of the early monarchy. In successive chapters, the author then deals with the origins of Israelite religion, the conquest and settlement, the monarchy, and aspects of the popular religion. Only a few salient points can be mentioned here. It is under Moses that Israel's 'monotheistic revolution' takes place. The novelty of the Sinai covenant is not in its content, but in its being given. Moral law becomes not just the wisdom of the sages, but the revealed will of God. The struggle with evil is no longer thought of as between divine forces, as in paganism, but between the will of God and that of man. The divine drama is translated from the realm of myth to that of history. At the conquest, the Canaanites were almost entirely wiped out or evicted by the tribal confederacy. There was no deep cultural or religious fusion with the Canaanites, the view that monotheism 'emerged' after a long period of syncretism being vigorously denied. From the beginning, there is a theoretical universalism implicit in YHWH's sovereign rule. Israel's national consciousness is not a matter of racial exclusiveness or superiority. She is bound to YHWH by covenant, not descent, and is to serve as the historic stage for his revelation. Her failure to realize the moral ideal set forth by the Torah—'the rift between ideal and reality'—gave rise to classical prophecy. The third part of the book is on 'Classical Prophecy'. After criticizing the ascription of large sections of prophetic works to editors or compilers as unjustified, the author considers in turn the individual prophets from Amos to Ezekiel. Hosea 1-3 is said to derive from a prophet of the time of Ahab, the remainder of the book being a century later. A more conservative view is taken of Isaiah, it being asserted that in chaps. 1-33 there is 'not one non-Isaianic verse.' Jeremiah is the prophet of Deuteronomy, which it is claimed he cites more than 200 times. The Deuteronomic reform *did* endure, and there is no evidence from Jeremiah that the influx of active pagan cults was the reason for the fall of Jerusalem. The

demonstrable insubstantialness of Ezekiel's visions of the sins of Jerusalem support the view that his ministry lay in Babylon throughout. His outlook is more that of the Torah than of classical prophecy, and his unconditional prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem are perhaps based on the old legends of rebellion and dire punishment in former days. He may therefore be called the prophet of the early religion. While it is certain that many of the views expressed by Professor Kaufmann in these 450 pages of closely reasoned argument will not command general acceptance, it is equally certain that every reader will be stimulated to think again on many old problems. Stemming as it does from one who stands in the direct line of Israel's long history, the work is of unique interest to all students of the Old Testament.

S. C. THEXTON

*The Concept of Love in Child Care*, by T. S. Simey. (Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d.)

The word 'love' is examined here in two technical senses. The first is in its religious sense, expressing the good relationship expounded and exemplified in the New Testament, and worked out by the Church throughout the centuries. The second technical use of the word is a more recent one, and is again used to express the good relationship, but this time by psychologists and sociologists. It has a special application to work for children, particularly the work for deprived children (orphaned, neglected, illegitimate, abandoned, or homeless) whose essential deprivation has been the loss or lack of the love of good parents—the warm relationship which is the foundation of mental health. Child care as we know it is a comparatively modern development in our civilization, although it has interesting historical roots. Professor Simey examines very critically the way in which the first wave of the Evangelical movement worked out in John Wesley's foundation and conduct of Kingswood School, and in George Muller's orphanages in Bristol. Soul-saving was confused with child care, and knowledge and understanding of children as children was largely absent. He is still critical, but also appreciative, of what he calls 'The Stephenson Tradition', as seen in the work of 'the less doctrinaire nineteenth-century pioneers', Stephenson (of the Children's Home), Barnardo (Dr Barnardo's Homes), and Rudolph (of what is now the Church of England Children's Society). He approves the 'home principle', the family system, and the selection and training of staff, but deplores any sentimentality or the too ready reliance on the 'success story' without a realistic appraisal of difficulties or failures. *Understanding and responsible love* is the phrase used to summarize the necessary balance in the good relationship. On the scientific side, Professor Simey attempts to state very briefly—perhaps too briefly—the 'concept of love' found in Freud, Jung, Suttie, and Bowlby, and how far they can be accepted by the Christian social worker. In the process he tilts cheerfully and vigorously at pseudo-science, and the too ready assumption that the social worker can remain satisfied with a process of adaptation or adjustment to the environment without reference to moral judgements. It is a stimulating and rewarding exercise to follow his argument. Finally, he recommends the social scientist to check his basic assumptions against Froebel's 'doctrine of the unitary whole', the synthesis of the inner spiritual life with the external environment, the conception of a community exemplifying those laws of love which are the laws of God in which the child may satisfy 'a sense of communion and oneness with those around him'. This Convocation Lecture of the National Children's Home, now published by the Oxford University Press, states courageously a dilemma in which social workers find themselves—an apparent choice between the guidance of science and religion, typified by the confusion in the use of the word 'love' to mean different things. The statement of the problem and the attempt at a synthesis, by one who is himself a convinced Christian and a professional sociologist, is timely and stimulating. It will be welcomed for its sincerity and forthrightness, and because it may well be the starting-point for other people's thinking.

ALAN A. JACKA



## NOTABLE ARTICLES IN PERIODICALS

*The Expository Times*, May 1961.

Hellenistic Thought in New Testament Times: The Stoics—III, by William Barclay.

The Will of God: In 1 Peter and 1 John, by G. Johnston.

The Faith-Ladder, by Bernard E. Jones.

*The Expository Times*, June 1961.

Hellenistic Thought in New Testament Times: The Stoics—IV, by William Barclay.

Some Problems of New Testament Translation, by C. H. Dodd.

Underestimated Theological Books: Frank Weston's, *The One Christ*, by H. E. W. Turner.

*The Harvard Theological Review*, April 1961.

The Hyperborean Maidens on Delos, by William Sale.

Simon-Peter, by Cecil Roth.

The Early Coleridge: His 'Rage for Metaphysics', by Lucyle Werkmeister.

The Strange Universe of Jonathan Edwards, by Rufus Suter.

*The Hibbert Journal*, April 1961.

Liberal Theology: Some Alternatives, by Karl Barth.

The Immortality of the Soul, by E. L. Allen.

Cyclopean Psychology, by John Cohen.

The University and the Training College, by M. L. Jacks.

Roman Catholic 'Principles' and the Future, by C. J. Wright.

*Interpretation*, April 1961.

A series of three articles on the Book of Job.

The Catholic Bible Movement in Germany, by J. Swidler.

The Interpretation of the Old Testament—II: Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament, by G. von Rad.

*Theology Today*, April 1961.

Easter Certainty, by Emil Brunner.

Preaching and the Word in the Reformation, by H. A. Oberman.

Reformed Worship: Yesterday and Today, by H. G. Hageman.

As Jane Austen saw the Clergy, by E. A. Cook.

Two Views on Jewish-Christian Co-existence, by A. R. Echart and O. A. Piper.

Experiment in Theology and Television, by W. Hamilton.

Theological Table-talk, by H. T. Ker.

*The International Review of Missions*, July 1961.

The Oecumenical Era and Denominational Sovereignty, by V. A. Sly.

Whose Congo?, by G. W. Carpenter.

In Central and Southern Africa for the Theological Education Fund, by T. R. Milford.

The Half-opened Door: The Herero Church in South-West Africa, by Gunther Reeh.

Like Father, Like Son: Some Reflections on the Church of Uganda, by J. Poulton.

Crossing Frontiers, by the Bishop of Bloemfontein and Théo. Schneider.

Policy Lessons from Korea, by J. C. Smith.

Bible Translation and *The Bible Translator*, by J. J. Kijne and W. R. Hutton.

*Scottish Journal of Theology*, June 1961.

Some Comments on Tillich's Doctrine of Creation, by J. Heywood Thomas.

The Christological Determinant in Barth's Doctrine of Creation, by D. L. Deegan.

The Catholic Critics of Karl Barth in Outline and Analysis, by G. E. Foley.

Ultimate Triumph, by C. S. Duthie.

Darkness, Christ and the Church in the Fourth Gospel, by D. O. Via, Jr.

## SHORTER SURVEY

*John T. Wilkinson*

THE RIGHT interpretation of the Bible is of perennial importance, not least the right understanding of the Old Testament. In 1938 Professor Sigmund Mowinckel published a series of lectures, now translated into English by a former

student, Professor R. B. Bjornard, under the title *The Old Testament as the Word of God* (Blackwell, 15s.). The author gives full weight to the historical and factual nature of the Old Testament as the basis of his discussion. The key to unlock the Old Testament is the recognition that 'revelation . . . is carried on through a historical "process" of divine self-unveiling and self-mediation through what happens—a history of revelation and salvation' (p.119). This book should be pondered deeply by all serious students of the Scriptures. The same can be said of two recent books on the parables of Jesus. The first is by Dr A. M. Hunter, of Aberdeen, whose work is at all times eagerly awaited. In *Interpreting the Parables* (S.C.M., 8s. 6d.) we are introduced to the background of the parables and to the history of their interpretation. The final chapter on 'Preaching the Parables' is exceedingly valuable, and should teach many a preacher 'how to do it'. The book cannot be too highly commended. Illustration of this right way is given in the work of Dr Helmut Thielicke, Professor of Theology in the University of Hamburg, an outstanding scholar and eminent preacher accustomed to draw immense congregations. In this series of sermons, published under the title of *The Waiting Father: Sermons on the Parables of Jesus* (James Clarke, 12s. 6d.), fifteen parables are expounded. Here is pertinent preaching close to the life of our time. Any volume by Canon C. E. Raven is always welcome. In *St Paul and the Gospel of Jesus: A Study in the Basis of Christian Ethics* (S.C.M., 5s.), he raises the old question as to whether St Paul corrupted the message of Jesus, and proceeds to show that out of his experiences of Christ, the apostle was led with new insight to understand the revolutionary implications of Jesus for the life of the world. In the present spiritual crisis of humanity, an acceptance of these implications is a primary requirement. The growing reputation of Dr Alan Richardson, Professor of Christian Theology at Nottingham University, is still further advanced by his latest book—the Cadbury Lectures—entitled *The Bible in the Age of Science* (S.C.M., 5s.). Outlining the scientific revolution, he shows that a theological revolution, widely unrecognized, but based on the Bible, accompanied it, and the new historical understanding of the Scriptures reveals the Bible as being the testimony of those who had the experience of God's saving power in the actual course of history. 'It is because of this testimony that the Bible speaks hope and consolation to man in this age of science, as in any previous age' (p.166). This is a timely book.

One of the needs of our generation is a sound return to expository preaching, and any preacher may profitably turn to a small book by Alan M. Stibbs, *Expounding God's Word: Some Principles and Methods* (Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 4s.). Illustrated by examples, it is wisely written.

As time passes, we become more and more indebted to the writings of Professor T. E. Jessop, who possesses the remarkable gift of providing for the needs both of the scholar and of those less instructed in theological concerns. In his recent book, *An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Nelson, 12s. 6d.), with characteristic lucidity, he meets the needs of the many laymen who are wanting to clarify their grasp of the Faith, those of an increasing number of teachers concerned with religious instruction (as required by the Education Act of 1944), together with those of other folk who, searching for a view of the world and a way of life, realize that they must face religious issues. Notwithstanding a chapter on the Church, the book is without denominational bias. Here is a book which can 'stretch the whole mind'. Similar things may be said of the latest book written by Professor Nels F. S. Ferré, whose characteristic spiritual insight was quickly discernible when he came to us at Hartley Victoria College on an exchange-lectureship, the substance of which is in *Know Your Faith* (Epworth Press, 8s. 6d.). In epigrammatic style he deals with fundamental elements. For example: 'The Cross is God's work in history. . . . Here God drilled through the partition between eternity and earthly time to admit the highest-voltage wire of his love' (p.57). This is a book to

possess and ponder. *Is that Good Doctrine?*, by David Stacey (Epworth Press, 12s. 6d.), is another most worth-while book. Written in lively style, and originating from talks to a group of Methodist local preachers, it would well serve as a text-book for any similar group. For more advanced reading in Christian doctrine and particularly in the field of Christology, the student will find great profit in a volume of essays, by Dr Maurice H. Relton, who has long been regarded as one of our most learned theologians. In his *Studies in Christian Doctrine* (Macmillan, 25s.), he discusses the Christian concept of God, Patristicism, Nestorianism, the Person of Christ in recent discussion, and with the problems of reunion in mind, a study in sacramentalism, with a concluding essay on the sacramentalist doctrine of Gregory of Nyssa. Though not always commanding assent, these pages are stimulating, not least by their clarity of expression, and they should be carefully weighed by every serious student of theology. *The Essence of Christianity*, by Anders Nygren (Epworth Press, 12s. 6d.), contains two essays now translated from the Swedish by Dr Philip S. Watson. The first, on 'The Permanent Element in Christianity', reveals the philosophical basis of Nygren's theological work, and although originally written in 1922, has relation to contemporary discussion concerning religious language and ideas. The second essay, on 'The Atonement as a Work of God', gives further illustration of the concept of *agape* which is the basis of Nygren's theology, shown so clearly in *Agape and Eros*, also translated by Mr Watson (1953). *The Mystery of God's Grace* (Bloomsbury Publishing Co., 12s. 6d.) is an English translation of Père Nicolas's *La Mystère de Grâce*. On the background of a careful analysis of the Thomist doctrine, the author deals with the origins of grace, its nature, forms, and functions. The reading of this book will be for the spiritual profit of any serious reader, whether Catholic or Protestant. *Biology, Psychology and Belief*, by Dr W. H. Thorpe (Cambridge University Press, 4s. 6d.) is the 1960 Arthur Stanley Eddington Memorial Lecture. Following a discussion of the nature of mind both in animals and men, the author finally asserts that 'any rational system of belief involves the conviction that the creative and sustaining Spirit of God may be everywhere present and active' (p.58). In his Inaugural Lecture as Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, Dr D. M. Mackinnon, in *The Borderlands of Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 3s. 6d.), deals at a deep level with the fact that 'no serious philosopher can hope to dodge the questions involved in the claims of religious credenda to truth' (p.8). Edited by Kenneth Twinn, *Essays in Unitarian Theology: A Symposium* (Lindsey Press 8s. 6d.) is a series of papers intended 'to stimulate further thinking among Unitarians, and at the same time interest the religious seeker in the approach of the Unitarian movement'. Those who do not share this theological position, however, can read it with profit.

Naturally the fourth centenary of the Scottish Reformation has produced several books on the subject. Most valuable, particularly for the general reader, is *The Kirk in Scotland*, by Dr James Bulloch (Saint Andrew Press, 25s.). A fine piece of historical scholarship, it is not merely a recital of events arising out of the decisive struggle of 1560, but a virile study of its abiding significance. Eminently readable, not least because of its skilful use of quotation, it should be invaluable to every Presbyterian reader, and should be read also by every student of church history, not least because the story of the Church in Scotland is so often neglected. From the same press, two other volumes are to hand. *The Scots Confession of 1560* (10s. 6d.) brings this *magna carta* of the Scottish Reformation within reach of the general public. The historical Introduction is that prepared by the late G. D. Henderson for the 1937 edition (now out of print), in which both Latin and Scots Texts were printed. The present edition gives the Scots text, and also a new rendering by Dr Bulloch of the *Confessio Scoticana* into modern English. This is a primary document for an understanding of the faith

of the Scottish Reformers. *Presbyterian Authority and Discipline* (The Chalmers Lectures, 15s.), by Dr John Kennedy, is a valuable and timely challenge, not only to the Church in Scotland, but also to any other Christian communion. It seeks 'to overcome what really amounts to an unnatural prejudice against Church discipline'. Alike to ministers and people, it is a salutary word. 'The whole purpose of the Reformers for the Church was to bring it back to the authority and discipline of Christ' (p.113).

In *English Religious Dissent* (Cambridge University Press, 18s. 6d.), Dr Erik Routley summarizes the rise and development of the Free Churches from the angle of dissent as an English institution. 'A principle of dissent is vital to a healthy society.' Wide in range, it is written with skill and vigour, though at times we find we must disagree with its assertions. Did Richard Baxter reject episcopacy? Was he 'a Presbyterian by habit'? Had he 'a touch of the spiritual pedant'? Again, it is not true to say that in 1760 Wesley 'approved the setting apart of lay evangelists who had the right to administer the sacraments within their societies' (p.150). Further, is it quite accurate to incorporate Methodism within the term 'Dissent' without qualification? Yet the book goes far to support the view, sometimes questioned in these days, that the Free Churches have a specific contribution to make at this present time, despite the accommodations arising out of the new ecumenism in church-relations, even though 'Dissent in the form of grievance is now dead'.

Historically, one of the central assertions of 'the gathered churches' has been that the local church is independent and free, without subjection to any denominational control. With the march of time, however, this theory of independence has become modified. An outstanding example of this is seen in a detailed case-study of the American Baptist Convention entitled *Authority and Power in the Free Church Tradition*, by Paul M. Harrison (Princeton University Press, 40s.). It shows how the Baptist denomination in America is now a highly complex institution, in which central leadership exercises considerable authority, not only over general policy, but over local churches—a seeming contradiction of Baptist belief concerning the nature of the Church. This careful analysis of the American situation has something to say to those churches in this country which still hold to the same tradition—and indeed is far from irrelevant to the problems involved in the creation of a united Free Church of England.

The origins and amalgamations of the Methodist Churches in the American continent form an interesting and intricate story. The Free Methodist Church sprang from the Methodist Episcopal Church in New York, 'not because of a secession, but because of expulsion', in the 1850's, of one Benjamin T. Roberts, 'a contender for original methodism', as to its spirituality and evangelistic ethos. This new denomination reached Canada in the early 1870's. The story is recounted in *The Battle was the Lord's: A History of the Free Methodist Church in Canada*, by J. W. Sigworth (Sage Publishing Co.). The book celebrates the centenary of the movement, and is a definitive account, immensely detailed and fully illustrated.

Of great ecumenical interest is the Report of the First National Conference of the Australian Churches, held at Melbourne University in 1960. It bears the title, *We Were Brought Together* (Australian Council, 23s.), edited by D. M. Taylor. This document indicates yet another landmark in ecumenical history. Edited by James Gray, *Towards Christian Union* (Berean Press, 10s.) is an official account of the work of the Churches of Christ since 1935, for closer union among themselves and of their witness in the ecumenical field. Six documents in Faith and Order—from 1920 to 1956—prepared on behalf of the Churches of Christ are added to this Report, which gives an insight into the unique work of this denomination in the interest of Christian Unity. *Anglicans and Methodists Talk Together*, published conjointly by S. P. C. K. and Epworth Press (3s.), and intended to be used along with the Interim Report of the

official Conversations (1958) for local discussion at the parochial and circuit level, should command widespread attention. *Significant Church History*, by R. G. Milburn (James Clarke, 7s. 6d.) discusses 'the successive phases of the impact of modern thought upon the Church of England during the last 100 and more especially during the last forty, years, and the changing reactions of the Church thereto' (p.9). The author traces 'the curve of thought' through four phases: the pre-critical period; the age of *Lux Mundi*; a 'period of drift'; and, finally, the period of demythologizing, leaving a situation of uncertainty. He is concerned with the fact that so many people have lost the deeper elements in religion, and remain content with mere observance, and he appeals for intellectual honesty in the presentation of Christian truth, not least by the preacher. In an appendix he suggests details for more flexibility in the worship of the parishes. Acutely critical—even to the point of questioning the necessity of subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles—it is a timely word, even for those who are not Anglicans.

Two biographies are to hand from the Epworth Press. *Kagawa of Japan*, by Cyril J. Davey (12s. 6d.), is a profoundly moving study of this great Christian, whose luminous quality became immediately apparent to those of us who were privileged to have him as a guest. As a young college student, Kagawa heard the story of the Cross, and that night made his first Christian prayer: 'O God, make me like Christ.' That prayer he himself fulfilled. Mr Davey tells the story magnificently, and whoever reads this book should recommend it and, seeking every opportunity, should tell the story to others. Two hundred years ago the Rev. John Fletcher was instituted to the living of Madeley in Shropshire. It is therefore fitting that the twenty-sixth Wesley Historical Society Lecture should be devoted to a study of this great Anglican-Methodist figure, now often overlooked; still, further, that the author should have been at one time curate in the same parish. In *Shropshire Saint: a Study in the Ministry and Spirituality of Fletcher of Madeley*, by George Lawton (Epworth Press 15s.), the early chapters present a clear portrait of Fletcher. The chapter on Fletcher as Christian Thinker contains a useful summary, but there is no serious discussion of the importance of his thought in relation to the crucial issues in the Calvinistic controversy. The chapter on Fletcher as Spiritual Director unfolds much of the secret of his own piety. The middle chapter on Fletcher's literary vocation shows clearly that Mr Lawton possesses an intimate knowledge of the writings, though we could wish that this had been produced as a separate monograph, thus allowing more space for the expansion of the theme indicated by the title of this useful and interesting book.

*Diary of a Misfit Priest*, by W. Rowland Jones (Allen & Unwin, 25s.), is the personal account of one who, during his nearly forty years pilgrimage within Anglicanism, was often deeply hurt, although the author states in his first sentence that the work is 'primarily a book about bishops'. Attracted by the ritual of Anglo-Catholicism, he resigned from his theological training in a Methodist College, was then ordained by Bishop Hensley Henson and re-ordained by that strange personality, Vernon Herford, 'Bishop of Mercia', and became co-pastor to Dr W. E. Orchard at King's Weigh House. In addition he held incumbencies in parishes in London and Manchester. Once he looked Romewards, but did not cross the threshold. He has now returned to the Methodist fold, and is a minister among us. It is the strange story of 'a sensitive rebel' against authority, who suffered much at the hands of certain bishops, though happily not all, for he remarks: 'I have nothing but praise for Doctor Greer, Bishop of Manchester . . . who fulfils the meaning of the mighty name of *episcopos*' (p.149). It would seem, however, that the blame was not on one side only. As a record of spiritual pilgrimage it pales alongside that of his former friend, Dr Orchard, as told in *From Faith to Faith*; as an examination of the problems of episcopacy in relation to reunion



in our day it is inadequate. It is 'a sad book' (to quote Dr Weatherhead, who writes the Foreword), but it should be read.

From the Protestant community of dedicated young men in the Burgundian village of Taizé—'an expression in contemporary dress of the original Benedictine way of life'—streams of spiritual influence flow into the modern outer world. *This Day Belongs to God* (Faith Press, 7s. 6d.) is a penetrating book, written by the Prior of Taizé, Roger Schutz, son of a Swiss pastor. Its origin lies in an awareness of the tragedy of Christian disunity in the face of the condition both of the Church and the world today. It is a heart-searching book which should be weighed deeply by every Christian. Here is the core of its message. 'If we are to remain ardent in the today that belongs to God, the vital love of Christ must come and feed the flame, reinforce love of our neighbour who is our brother' (p.63). As a contribution to Christian spirituality, this book is not to be measured by its modest dimensions, but by its profound insight. In 1945, Dr Nathaniel Micklem, now Principal Emeritus of Mansfield College, Oxford, produced a philosophical poem, *The Labyrinth*, revealing his fine ability to express profound truth through meditative verse in English classical form. In *The Labyrinth Revisited* (Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d.) he has again used this medium to express his deepest thoughts on the nature of the world and man's search for God. It is a profound meditation upon the Christian philosophy, to be read and read again. He who reads—the occasional unusual words notwithstanding—will come 'to see a love unbreakable upon the plane Revealed of time and space and history'. A booklet by Dr J. Alan Kay, *Devotions for Ministers* (Epworth Press, 1s.), will enrich the life of the ministry far beyond its modest size.

Recent Wyvern Books published by Epworth Press include a reprint of Dr H. B. Workman's classic, *Persecution in the Early Church* (3s. 6d.); Dr Leslie D. Weatherhead's *A Plain Man Looks at the Cross* (2s. 6d.); Dr A. M. Chirgwin's *The Bible in World Evangelism* (3s. 6d.)—all of which could form excellent material for study groups. In the same series, *An Ancient Mariner* (3s. 6d.) is a reprint of Bernard Martin's excellent Life of John Newton; William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* is most fittingly issued in the bicentenary year of his death. Two excellent Lent books are to hand. *The Enduring Passion*, by T. E. Jessop (Epworth Press, 5s.) is a penetrating study of the Cross in the author's inimitable and lucid style—with an enriching appendix of poems of the Passion of Christ. *The Serpent in the Wilderness*, by J. C. G. Greig (Independent Press, 7s. 6d.), is not an easy book, but one which, with scholarly acumen, faces the intellectual problems arising out of the mission and sufferings of Jesus, to conclude that 'in the wilderness of our twentieth century, He is our healing Serpent'.

We note three recent paper-backs from the Inter-Varsity Fellowship: Leon Morris: *Spirit of the Living God* (4s.), useful for any study circle wanting to consider the doctrine of the Holy Spirit; M. C. Griffith, *Consistent Christianity* (3s. 6d.)—a practical discussion of ethical problems; M. J. Loane, *Makers of Religious Freedom*, four well-knit studies of Alexander Henderson and Samuel Rutherford, John Bunyan and Richard Baxter.

Finally, we note *Later Poems*, by Gilbert Thomas (David & Charles, 10s.), the latest addition to the practical work of one widely known within our circles and beyond as critic, essayist and reviewer. These gentle verses, touched by Wordsworthian simplicity and at times by the whimsical feeling of Walter de la Mare, form a small volume, for quiet reading and reflection.

## Our Contributors

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